

# NI Bulletin

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We are into another new year and this one is special for NI. With this edition we begin our 50th year of the Bulletin magazine. We have also reworked the NI website where you can now view a color version of the bulletin; please see the November / December 2014 bulletin for information about website access. Furthermore this is my 10th year as your editor and in October it will be ten full years.

We are delighted to publish another definitive work on Spanish American coinage with Jorge Proctor's "The Assayers of the Mint of Mexico During the 16th Century Pillars Coinage, 1536-1571(?)" which covers the history of the Mexico City mint from inception through the end of the Charles & Joanna issues. This series of coins is widely popular with collectors. I hope that you find it both interesting and useful.

Please consider the NI bulletin if you are composing your own articles and refer us to your contacts who are numismatic writers. These pages are open, especially to members.

The board of governors, the NI staff and the bulletin editors wish you a good year.

*Herman*

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**NI**

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## Membership Report

We received the following applications for membership.

Ray Williams (#2768), Nicolás Liakopoulos (#2769), Luis Venegas (#2770), Jorge Ortiz Murias (#2771), William Snyder (#2772), Derek Jones (#2773), Sulphur Springs Library of Sulphur Springs, TX (#2774) and DNB Bibliotek (De Nederlandsche Bank) (#2775).

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**NI**

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## The Assayers of the Mint of Mexico During the 16th Century Pillars Coinage, 1536-1571(?) Jorge A. Proctor, NI #2732

What can be considered the cornerstone for the creation of the first operational mint in America was laid on March 30, 1530, when, on this date, Don García Fernández Manrique (simply named in the documents as Don García Manrique), the third Count of Osorno (*Conde de Osorno*) and President of the Council of the Indies and of the King's Council of Military-Religious Orders (*Consejo de Ordenes*) was given the titles to the office of the treasury at the mints that Spain was planning to establish in Mexico City and Santo Domingo.<sup>(1)</sup> Despite this propitious beginning, Spain's American colonies would have to wait a few more years before any further action was taken.



Portrait of Don Antonio de Mendoza y Pacheco  
First Viceroy of New Spain  
Oil on canvas, unknown artist  
© Museo Nacional de Historia (Mexico)

Spanish *la Vera-Cruz*, literally meaning in English: “the True Cross”) on October 2, 1535, and entering the city of Mexico on November 14, 1535.<sup>(5)</sup> There the Viceroy found Francisco del Rincón already holding a recommendation from the King to be given a job at the new mint to be established. Viceroy Mendoza decided to give him the office of assayer, as he said that Francisco del Rincón had the necessary skills to exercise this position.<sup>(6)</sup>

On April 17, 1535 Don Antonio de Mendoza was appointed by Charles I (*Carlos I*), King of Spain, as the first Viceroy of New Spain.<sup>(2)</sup> On this same day he starts to receive the instructions for the governance of his new territory, in preparations for his departure. On April 25th he receives additional instructions. One of them was to establish a mint for making coins of silver and copper.<sup>(3)</sup> Mendoza's directive to establish a mint in Mexico City (or *Tenochtitlán-México*, as the city was then referred to) actually preceded the Royal decree formally creating a Mexican mint. That order was not signed until May 11, 1535 by Queen Isabella (*Isabel*) of Portugal, serving for her husband King Charles I as the Spanish Regent.<sup>(4)</sup>

The new Viceroy Mendoza traveled to New Spain with the decree, minting tools and equipment, arriving at the port city of Veracruz (originally spelled in

In 1536, coins of the so-called Early Series, better known as the pillars without waves design, began to be minted in Mexico.<sup>(7)</sup> These coins show an assayer mark of R for Francisco del Rincón, and a mint mark of M for Mexico. While the exact date when mint production began is not yet known, it is presumed that this took place sometime in April 1536.<sup>(8)</sup> In any case, it is certain that the mint was already in operation by May 1536, as the City Council made mention of this in a letter of May 29, 1536.<sup>(9)</sup>



**2 reales coin minted in Mexico.** As can be seen, this coin shows on the obverse the M, mintmark for Mexico, and on the reverse the R for assayer Francisco del Rincón. The gothic legend of this entire coin identifies it as being from the first output of this mint - circa 1536.

Coin images courtesy of Ponterio & Associates, Inc.

Soon after the new mint began operating with the officials he had appointed, Viceroy Mendoza learned that appointments were being made in Spain to these same offices. It did not take long for this to become a serious problem for the Viceroy, who wrote to the King about it on December 10, 1537.<sup>(10)</sup> In his letter the Viceroy explained how in accordance with the instructions given to him he had filled the offices necessary to run the mint. Soon after the mint had commenced operations, however, he had begun to receive notifications that the King had made his own appointments to offices like that of weight-master and guard. This was causing him great concern, the Viceroy said, because the officials he had appointed had worked hard through a trying period of experimentation at the mint. They had become proficient at their jobs through trial and error, and now he did not think it was fair to displace them in favor of officials being sent from Spain.

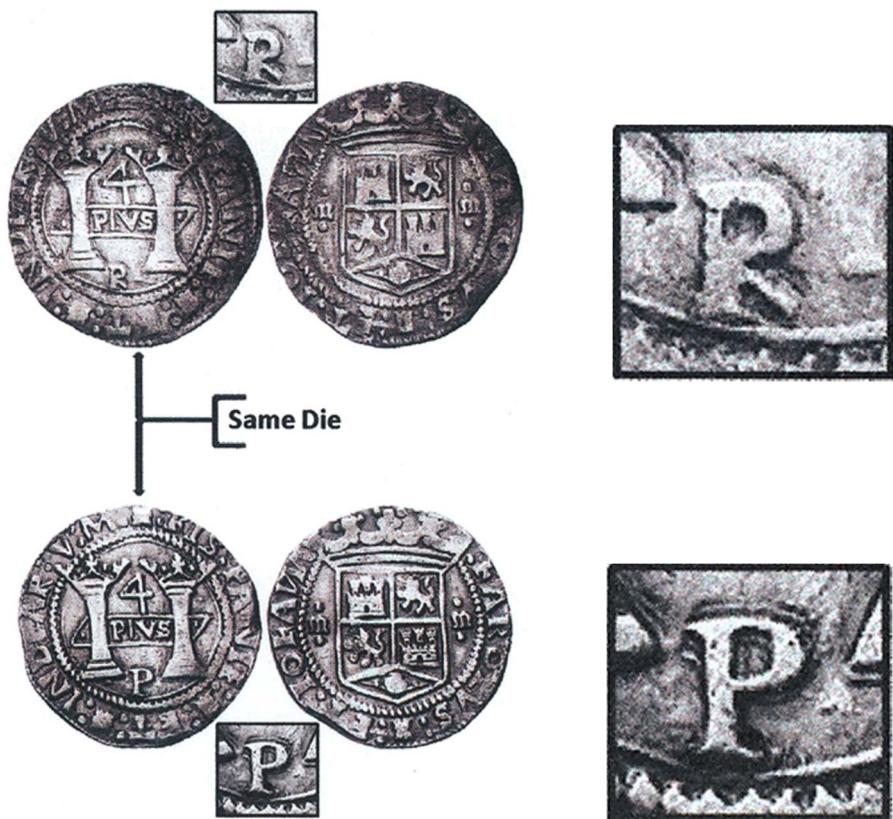
Although in his December letter Mendoza did not mention it, the dual office of assayer and smelter would not prove immune to this problem. In fact, from Spain the King issued a decree on December 21, 1536 giving the ownership of this office to Pedro de la Membrilla, with the right to exercise the post himself, if he chose to, or to appoint a lieutenant of his choosing.<sup>(11)</sup> As it turned out, this appointment did not cause a problem at the Mexico City mint. Pedro de la Membrilla opted to remain in Spain, appointing his father, Licentiate Gutiérrez Velázquez, as his administrator, and in turn, his father agreed to retain Francisco del Rincón in office under the appointment that had previously been given to him by the Viceroy of Mexico.

Francisco del Rincón's initial tenure seems to have been coming to an end in 1538, at which time he might have left this post to serve as Lieutenant Treasurer.<sup>(12)</sup> Although the exact date when this took place is not known, it is certain that this took place after March 22, 1538, as this is the last confirmed date for his presence as assayer at the mint.<sup>(13)</sup> Probably anticipating his departure, and with the need to have someone in Mexico that could now lease the office to new candidates on behalf of Pedro de la Membrilla, Gutiérrez Velázquez on July 31, 1538 signed a power of attorney for

Licentiate Francisco de Loaiza, *Oidor*<sup>(14)</sup> of the *Audiencia*<sup>(15)</sup> of Mexico, so that he could be their representative.<sup>(16)</sup> So who followed assayer R as the mint's working assayer?



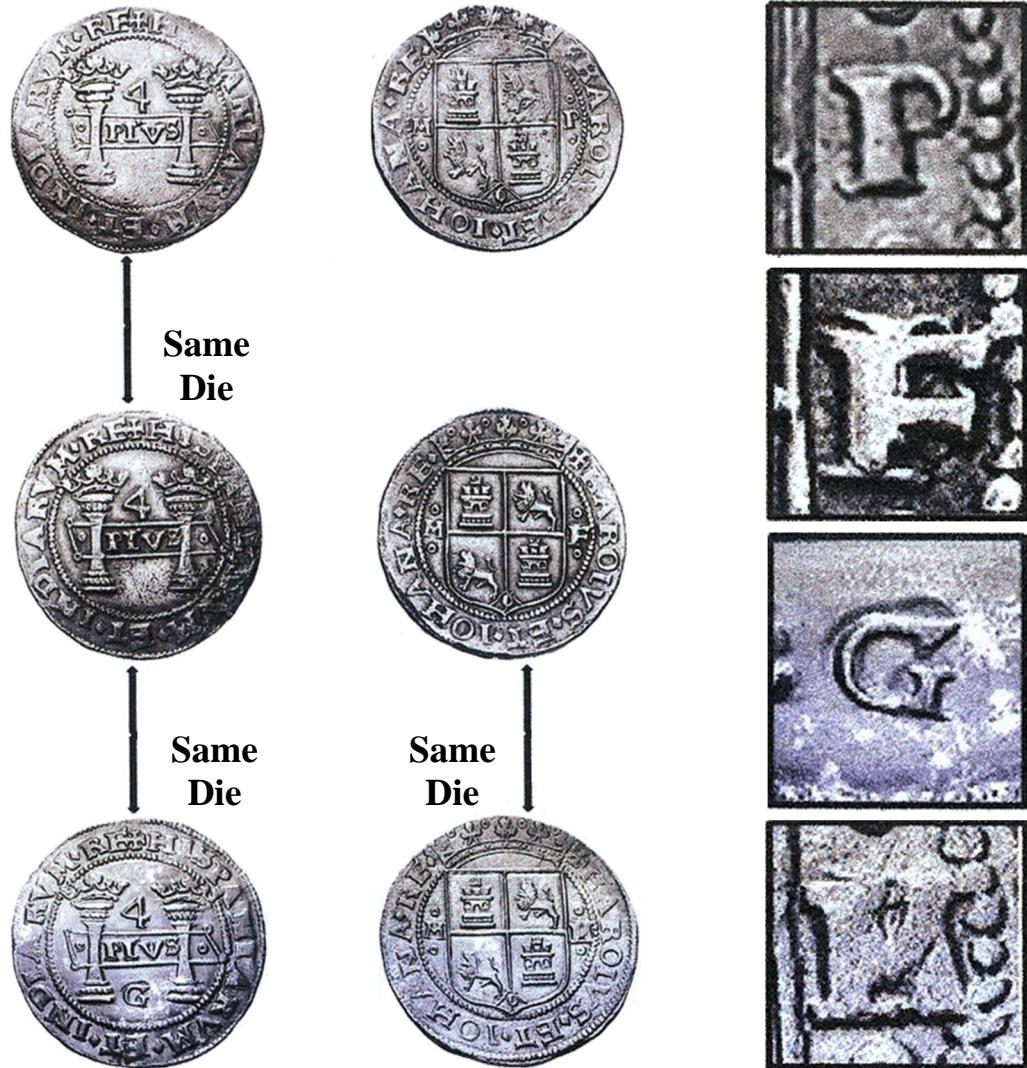
Assayer "P" coin produced with re-cut dies of assayer "R"



Coins showing the sequence from Assayer R to Assayer P

At one time it was believed that Assayer G followed assayer R. But this belief has been dismissed by the physical evidence found on the coins, which exhibit clear confirmation that assayer P followed assayer R and then, in turn, assayer F followed assayer P, all before assayer G took office.<sup>(17)</sup> So, does the documentary evidence also support what is seen on the coins? The answer is yes. Since Juan Gutiérrez (assayer G) in the 1545 investigation of the Mint conducted by the visiting Counselor of the Council of the Indies, Licentiate Francisco Tello de Sandoval testified that he had been at the mint for six years, then, that would mean that he did not start working at the mint until 1539 (this is also something that Juan Gutiérrez alludes to again in 1554 where he says that he had held the rights to the office of smelter for 15 years by this date) for which he (Juan Gutiérrez) then could not have followed Francisco del Rincón as assayer in 1538.<sup>(18)</sup> Furthermore, Gutiérrez's lack of clarification as to what positions he might have served in before he became the assayer on record at the

mint<sup>(19)</sup> is what has created further complications in establishing the beginning of his tenure, as it is now apparent that his tenure as the assayer on record at the mint most likely did not begin until late 1541 or early 1542, as will be discussed later.



The coins above (and on the previous page) are mostly as presented by numismatic scholar Kent Ponterio in his article *The Coinage of Mexico Struck During the Reign of Charles and Johanna* and in his description of lot 9096 (in Ponterio and Associates Inc., Public Auction Sale No. 150, Los Angeles, CA, August 8, 2009.) To Kent Ponterio goes full credit for this description and presentation and for the rediscovery of the correct sequence of the early assayers from Mexico, which we now know to be assayers: R, P, F and G.

Continuing with assayer P, mint records identify assayer P as Pedro de Espina, who had previously been appointed as assayer of the foundry of Mexico since December 24, 1531<sup>(20)</sup> and also served as overseer (*veedor*) of silver for the city since January 24, 1533.<sup>(21)</sup> Studies of the coins by numismatic scholar Kent Ponterio have shown that the coins of assayer P are, by far, the most frequently encountered of the early series, and that there are more die varieties for this assayer than from all the other assayers of this series combined.<sup>(22)</sup> This is indicative of a long tenure which is supported by the known documentation which shows that Pedro de Espina was still serving as assayer on October 22, 1541.<sup>(23)</sup> Although we don't know when Pedro de

Espina's tenure ended, it is clear that this happened around this date, or shortly thereafter, for which it seems that an unknown official followed as an interim assayer (assayer F), while a more suitable replacement could be selected, this last replacement being Juan Gutiérrez (assayer G). The extremely short tenure of assayer F is further confirmed by Kent Ponterio who noted that nearly all the dies used in minting the coins under assayer F, and even some of the initial dies used under assayer G, were reused dies from the former assayer P.<sup>(24)</sup>

Now, as for the identity of assayer F, two names have been proposed in the past as possible candidates. The first person considered is Francisco de Loaiza, the *Oidor* of the *Audiencia* of Mexico, mentioned before, who held the power of attorney from Gutiérrez Velázquez, administrator to Pedro de la Membrilla (the owner of the office). Since Francisco de Loaiza was responsible for finding suitable candidates and leasing the office to them, it is believed that while a suitable replacement could be found, he could have worked the office himself under the provisions of the agreement, especially if Pedro de Espina's tenure ended abruptly. But unless clear indication is found that Francisco de Loaiza ever served as a silversmith, smelter or assayer, or that he even had the necessary skills to execute this office, it seems doubtful that he would have worked the office himself, since he had his own responsibilities as *Oidor* of the *Audiencia*.

The second person considered is Esteban Franco, an assayer from the foundry of Mexico who was brought to the mint during the 1545 investigation of the mint to perform the proper assays on the coins.<sup>(25)</sup> The fact that he seemed to have been brought in from the foundry as an outside source, impartial to the investigation, was thought to be a problem with respect to his name being suggested as a candidate. Since the 1545 investigation was examining the mint operations going all the way back to when it started striking coins in 1536, it was thought that if Esteban Franco had been involved in mint production at any point, then he should have been called to testify; which he was not. But new evidence seems to eliminate this concern, as not only do the records from the Tello de Sandoval investigation not show any previous mint officials testifying, but a newly discovered document shows that at least one of these former officials was in the city, and he was not called either.<sup>(26)</sup> So, it now seems that Tello de Sandoval, by choice or design, did not extend the call for witnesses beyond current employees, and if this is the case, then Esteban Franco could have been the official identified by the assayer-mark F seen on the coins. With this new information I will leave for now the name of this assayer as Esteban Franco(?), with a big question mark, awaiting further documentation that confirms his actual presence at the mint, or dismisses his possible involvement.

An interesting turn of events regarding this official is that a separate investigation was conducted on him by Tello de Sandoval between 1544-46, covering the period that he served as assayer and smelter at the foundry, for which he was found guilty of improprieties. The sentence announced in late 1546 as a result of this investigation was that he had to pay a fine in gold and the post of assayer and smelter at the foundry was taken away from him, for which he was banned from working as assayer or smelter anywhere in the Indies for a period of two years.<sup>(27)</sup>

The fourth assayer of the mint was Juan Gutiérrez. In 1537, the initial plan was for Juan Gutiérrez to travel to Mexico with his brother, Alonso Gutiérrez. But, after both obtained licenses,<sup>(28)</sup> there seems to have been a problem, and only Juan Gutiérrez

was able to make the trip.<sup>(29)</sup> Juan Gutiérrez started working at the mint in 1539, as previously mentioned, and since we know that Assayer P was still in office as of October 22, 1541, before assayer G's tenure started, and was then followed by assayer F for an extremely shortly period of time, then assayer G's tenure most likely started sometime between late December 1541 and early February 1542. This timeline is supported by the coins, for which according to Kent Ponterio, "there are not that many dies in the early series for assayer G and you can basically die link the entire group in progression."<sup>(30)</sup> The reason for this small number of dies is directly linked to the end of production of the coins of the early series, which stopped being minted around mid-1542, when new dies were prepared as a change to the coin's design was instituted. The new coins that started to be minted in 1542 are today known as the Late Series or the pillars and waves design, as their most noticeable difference, when compared to the previous design, is the addition of waves underneath the pillars.<sup>(31)</sup>

In conjunction with the mintage of the coins with the new design, and as an added modification by Viceregal order of June 28, 1542, the mintmark for Mexico was also modified with the addition of a lower-case "o" above the **M** although the **M**-alone mintmark continued concurrently with the new one, as demonstrated by coins minted after 1542.<sup>(32)</sup>



(Images courtesy of Bowers and Merena Auctions)

**Two 4 reales coins from Mexico's assayer G, Juan Gutiérrez, minted between 1542 and 1548.** The coin to the left includes the addition of the lower-case "o" above the M (M), as mandated by the Viceregal order of June 28, 1542, whereas on the coin to the right, the M-alone mintmark remained unaltered. The use of both mintmarks continued concurrently with each other until the coins with the new design, mandated by the decree of March 8, 1570, were minted.

The City Council of Mexico, by November 28, 1542, had heard news of Spain's plan to institute a comprehensive administrative reform for its New World colonies, known today as the New Laws of 1542, for which they gave a commission to Francisco de Loaiza, *Oidor* of the *Audiencia*, and to Pedro Almindez Cherino, Overseer of Smelting (*Veedor de Fundiciones*), so that they could travel to Spain to react against Spain's new reform.<sup>(33)</sup> The new laws, designed to ensure fairer

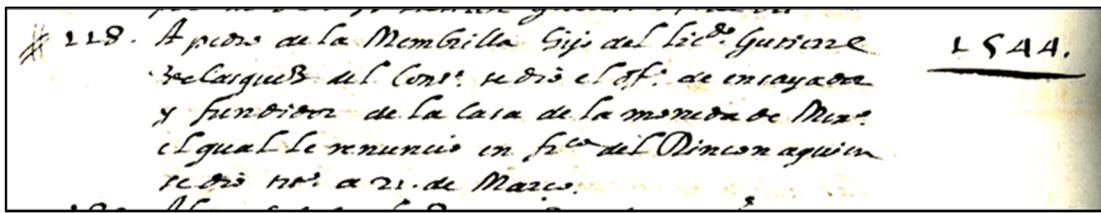
treatment for the Indians, while weakening the King's more ambitious Spanish subjects, were in fact enacted, sparking serious resentment when the colonial authorities were notified.

In 1543, it seems that Juan Gutiérrez's most recent tenure was coming to an end, for which Francisco de Loaiza, prior to his departure for Spain<sup>(34)</sup> and while still holding the power of attorney to lease the office on behalf of Pedro de la Membrilla, attempted to lease the office to Francisco del Rincón; most likely the cousin of the first assayer by the same name.<sup>(35)</sup> But this was not to be, as, according to Loaiza, the Viceroy of New Spain and the Treasurer of the mint rejected this lease, saying that they would not accept Francisco del Rincón for that office. No explanation is given for the rejection, but if we are talking about the cousin of the first assayer, this could have simply been due to a perceived inexperience in his skill.<sup>(36)</sup> At the end, Francisco de Loaiza, saying that he did not want to leave the office vacant, agreed on January 17, 1543 to give the lease again to Juan Gutiérrez, for a period of two years to begin on August 1, 1543.

With the departure of Francisco de Loaiza from Mexico, a new representative had to be selected. This responsibility now fell on the newly appointed *Oidor* of the Mexican *Audiencia* Licentiate Hernando Gómez de Santillán,<sup>(37)</sup> who, like his predecessor had done, under a new power of attorney drafted on September 29, 1543 in Valladolid, could appoint someone to this office, or, as an added provision, sell the office outright.<sup>(38)</sup>

With this power of attorney in hand, Gómez de Santillán retained Juan Gutiérrez under lease, that is until a sale contract for 1500 Pesos in mined gold (*Oro de Minas*),<sup>(39)</sup> was initiated on April 22, 1544,<sup>(40)</sup> with Juan Gutiérrez, as the primary holder, and Alonso de Villaseca,<sup>(41)</sup> as his trustee (*fiador*). As part of this sale contract, Juan Gutiérrez and Alonso de Villaseca paid in silver a deposit valued at 750 Pesos worth of the mined gold, for which, Gutiérre Velázquez would then guarantee that he would send to Mexico, within a two-year time, the provision signed by the King naming Juan Gutiérrez as the owner of the office, or, if for some reason he was not approved for this office, he would then give him his deposit back. As an added provision of the sale, Juan Gutiérrez was told that while the provision was being signed the office would remain in the name of Pedro de la Membrilla and his administrator, Gutiérre Vélazquez, but that he would still be allowed to continue working the office without having to pay any rent.

Now, as this was going on in Mexico in 1544, in Spain, the former first assayer of the mint, Francisco del Rincón, appeared before Gutiérre Velazquez and persuaded him to sell the office of assayer and smelter owned by his son, Pedro de la Membrilla, for 550 ducats, claiming that it was not worth more than that, and that no one in Mexico would be willing to buy it.<sup>(42)</sup> But once news of the sale in Mexico arrived back in Spain, Gutiérre Velásquez realized that Francisco del Rincón had deceived him. In fact, Gutiérre Velásquez no longer had the title, which had already been transferred to Francisco del Rincón on March 21, 1544,<sup>(43)</sup> and if he wanted to do business with Juan Gutiérrez, he now needed to first have the sale to Francisco del Rincón annulled and the title transferred back to his son, Pedro de la Membrilla.



Renunciation of the office of assayer and smelter by Gutiérre Velazquez, on behalf of his son, Pedro de la Membrilla, to Francisco del Rincón: (Right margin) “1544” Transcript of central text: “*A pedro de la Membrilla hijo del licenciado Gutierrez Velasquez del Consejo se dio el oficio de ensayador y fundidor de la Casa de la moneda de Mexico el qual le renuncio en francisco del Rincon aquien se dio titulo a 21 de Março.*”

Source: Document 9/5705, f. 353v - General Index of the papers of the Council of the Indies, Library of the Royal Academy of History, Madrid, Spain.

Based on the erroneous statement that Francisco del Rincón had purchased the office of assayer and smelter on March 21, 1543 (the correct year is 1544), the appearance of coins with an assayer mark R in Mexico around this time prompted some to attribute this mark to Francisco del Rincón (the first assayer of the mint), and others to his brother Alonso del Rincón, serving as his lieutenant.<sup>(44)</sup> But, the shift in years from 1543 to 1544 has now made this attribution questionable. With Francisco del Rincón (the first assayer) remaining in Spain after the 1544 sale, at which time Alonso del Rincón, his brother, was exercising the post of die-sinker at the mint in Mexico, a fact that is fully documented in the Tello de Sandoval investigation of 1545, then the possibility remains that the identity of this assayer could then be that of Francisco del Rincón (their cousin).<sup>(45)</sup> Although Francisco had been denied the post in 1543, his character had not come into question since he remained as a mint employee. By 1544 whatever objections prevented him from being ratified by the Treasurer and the Viceroy in 1543 might have been resolved, or it might just be that as a temporary replacement for Juan Gutiérrez, conceivably due to illness, his ability might have been considered good enough. In any case, with the current documentary evidence not providing any further clues to help confirm the identity of this official, I will retain Francisco del Rincón (the cousin of the first assayer) as a possible candidate.



Late Series 4 reales coin minted in Mexico with the mark of assayer R  
(Coin images courtesy of Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC)

On December 4, 1544, Gutiérre Velázquez, acting as the administrative representative of his son Pedro de la Membrilla, presented a complaint through Sebastián Rodríguez,<sup>(46)</sup> Solicitor in the Council of the Indies (*Solicitador en el Consejo de las Indias*), claiming that although Francisco del Rincón had already paid 400 ducats of the 550 initially agreed upon under the premise that no one would pay more for it, he had now been made aware that the office was really worth 1800 ducats,<sup>(47)</sup> which clearly showed that the purchase had been done through fraud and deceit. On the

same day a copy of Gutiérre Velázquez' complaint was presented before the court, which ruled in favor of Pedro de la Membrilla. With this ruling, on December 5th, Prince Philip (*Felipe*), as Regent and on behalf of his father King Charles I of Spain,<sup>(48)</sup> ordered that this decision be presented to Francisco del Rincón, who, from the date that he was made aware of it, directly or indirectly, was given 15 days to appear before the Council of the Indies in person or by proxy to present his arguments. As part of this ruling, Francisco del Rincón was given the option to take his deposit back from Diego de la Haya, Purser (*Cambio*) of the Court, and return the title that had been given to him, or to pay the additional money owed to bring the sale price now to the 1800 ducats; the amount that the office was said to be worth. Failure to comply with the mandate to appear before the Council would result in the loss of his rights and the title to this office.<sup>(49)</sup>

The King's scribe, Juan de Lezcano, by request of Juan Lobo on behalf of Gutiérre Velázquez, found Francisco del Rincón in Seville on December 16, and served him with the summons in person. But by January 2, 1545 no answer had been received, so, on January 7 del Rincón's default was registered in Valladolid<sup>(50)</sup> and with the case closed, Pedro de la Membrilla received the office back a month later, on February 7.<sup>(51)</sup>

With the office now back in the hands of Pedro de la Membrilla, Gutiérre Vélazquez completed the sale to Juan Gutiérrez by transferring the office to its new owner. Juan Gutiérrez was ratified on February 22, 1545.<sup>(52)</sup> But with slow communication between Spain and the Indies, we know that news of the ratification of this sale in Spain had not yet been received in Mexico by the time of the Tello de Sandoval investigation, as between May 27 and July 15, 1545, this office was still being reported as owned by Gutiérre Velazquez or his son, Pedro de la Membrilla.<sup>(53)</sup>

Juan Gutiérrez, as the owner of the post of assayer and smelter, had the right to appoint a lieutenant who could exercise the post on his behalf. But instead, he opted to continue working it himself. That is until, due to worsening indispositions ("yndisposiciones que tiene las quales se le an rrecrecido"), in late 1547 he realized that he needed help. Promptly, he sent a letter to Spain requesting for his brothers, Alonso Gutiérrez and Hernando de Peralta, to make the journey to Mexico so that they could assist him with the execution of the post of assayer.<sup>(54)</sup>

The letter arrived in Juan Gutiérrez's hometown of Fuensalida (town located near Toledo, Spain) around December 1547.<sup>(55)</sup> Preparations were quickly made by Alonso to travel to the city of Seville, where he was to deliver a bill of exchange (*una cédula de cambio*) sent with the letter and addressed to Francisco Gómez, a merchant from the city of Seville, so that he could give Alonso 50 ducats to assist with the expenses in preparations for the journey.

On April 8, 1548, having returned from Seville, Alonso Gutiérrez appeared before Cristóbal López, the Municipal Magistrate (*Alcalde Ordinario*) at Fuensalida, where, in front of the Scribe, Juan Alonso, and some witnesses he pleaded for the required permit needed to obtain the license to travel to New Spain. But, unable to present, as evidence, the letter from Juan Gutiérrez, which Alonso had left in Seville, the magistrate opted to conduct an examination, interviewing witnesses, before granting approval.<sup>(56)</sup> At the end Alonso Gutiérrez did get his approval, receiving his license to travel to Mexico in Seville on May 7, 1548.<sup>(57)</sup>

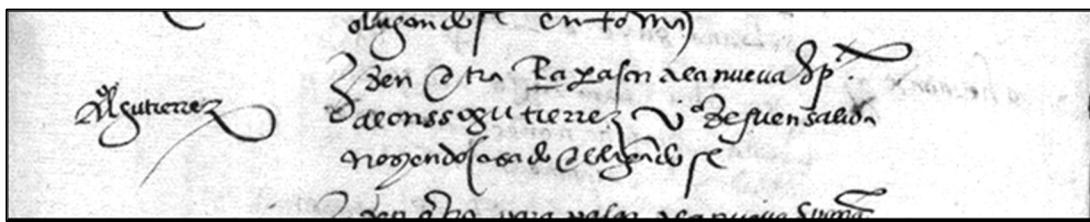
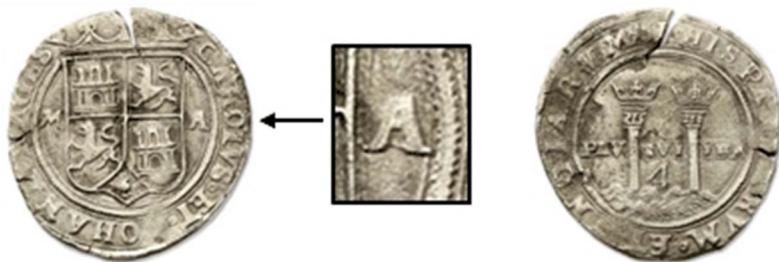


Image of the portion of the page from May 7, 1548 containing Alonso Gutiérrez's license to travel to New Spain. The text reads as follows:

Left margin: "Alonso gutierrez"    Central text: "I den otra Para pasar a la nueva Spña alonssو gutierrez vecino de fuensalida no siendo Casado obligandose"

(Source: AGI: Indiferente, 1964, L. 10, F. 364R)

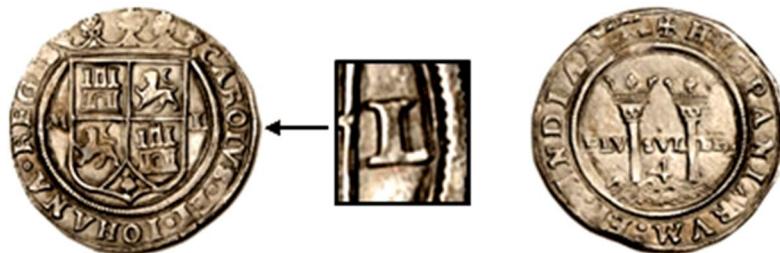
Although the date of Alonso's arrival in Mexico is currently not known, the appearance of coins in Mexico with an assayer-mark A at this precise time seems to indicate that his departure took place shortly after receiving his license; after all, the sole purpose of his trip was to assist his brother by taking on the post of assayer.<sup>(58)</sup>



**Late Series 4 reales coin minted in Mexico with the mark of assayer A**  
(Coin image courtesy of Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC)

The involvement of assayer A should have been the solution so eagerly awaited by Juan Gutiérrez. But this was not to be the case. New unforeseen complications ("justos ynpedimientos") arose shortly after, and Juan Gutiérrez was left with no other choice other than to renounce the office of assayer in favor of a more capable individual. And so it was that on November 2, 1548 Juan Gutiérrez initiates the transfer of the post of assayer in favor of Luis Rodríguez, a silversmith (*platero*) from Mexico and former assistant assayer at the foundry,<sup>(59)</sup> while still keeping the post of smelter under his control. Unknown at the time, the split of the posts of assayer and smelter into two separate offices would come into question at a later date, as it was said that these were considered one joint office, and not two separate ones.

Knowing the long delays in communication between Spain and its colonies, and with a sense of urgency, Juan Gutiérrez went before the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza who on November 8, 1548 drafted an order to be presented before the mint's treasurer, so that Luis Rodríguez be allowed to start exercising the post of assayer immediately, while awaiting receipt of the official ratification from Spain.<sup>(60)</sup> With this authorization Luis Rodríguez went to the mint of the city on November 9, 1548 where he was sworn in before the following mint officials: Miguel de Herrera, Lieutenant Treasurer; Francisco del Rincón, Die-sinker; Alonso Franco, Guard, Juan de Cepeda, Weight-master; and Pedro Sanchez de la Fuente, the Scribe.<sup>(61)</sup>



**Late Series 4 reales coin minted in Mexico with the mark of assayer L**  
**(Coin images courtesy of Ponterio & Associates, Inc.)**

Having been sworn in, Luis Rodríguez was given a year and a half to make the proper payments required, with the penalty of losing his post if he defaulted. In the meantime, Luis Rodríguez's appointment was ratified under a decree signed in the Village of Cigales on October 15, 1549<sup>(62)</sup> by Archduke Maximilian and his wife Doña María (daughter of King Charles I),<sup>(63)</sup> the "Rulers of Bohemia" (*los "Reyes de Bohemia"*) (an honorary title at the time),<sup>(64)</sup> serving as Regents of Spain and the Indies due to the absences of King Charles I and his son Prince Philip.<sup>(65)</sup>



**Archduke Maximilian and his wife Doña María, "Rulers of Bohemia"**  
**Portraits by Antonio Moro (1550 and 1551 – inv Nos. P02111 and P02110)**  
**(© Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid)**

Upon receipt of this decree in Mexico, Luis Rodríguez was sworn in again on August 18, 1550.<sup>(66)</sup>

However, back in Spain, Juan Gutiérrez's decision to keep the office of smelter, while only transferring that of assayer, would now bring a lengthy litigation when the Attorney General (*Fiscal*) of the Council of the Indies, Licentiate Martín Ruiz de Agreda,<sup>(67)</sup> filed a complaint on the premise that the posts of assayer and smelter were one office and not two. As such, Agreda added, the transfer of the office of assayer to Luis Rodríguez should not have been ratified, as it had been done through concealment and deceit.<sup>(68)</sup>

The complaint was quickly presented before the Council of the Indies who agreed that while the matter was being studied a new decree should be sent to the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* of Mexico to prevent Luis Rodríguez from continuing to receive the salaries and other rights bestowed on this office; in short, to prevent him from exercising the post of assayer. On December 18, 1552, Prince Philip, once again while serving as Regent to his father King Charles I of Spain<sup>(69)</sup> and following the Council of the Indies' recommendation, ordered that the *Audiencia* of Mexico notify Luis Rodríguez of the current decision, while also providing him with a period of eight months from the date that the order was presented to him, to appear before the Council of the Indies in person or by proxy, and present any argument he wanted considered.<sup>(70)</sup> As an added warning, and as it was customary, the order also advised that absence or rebelliousness would result in the loss of his rights, except that of being notified of the final ruling.

It will be almost a year and a half before this order would be presented before the high tribunals of Mexico. But, while the arrangements were being made for the sending of Prince Philip's Royal decree, it seems that sometime in 1553 chatter of the pending complaint might have made it to the ears of Luis Rodríguez in Mexico. The appearance of an assayer-mark S around this exact same time<sup>(71)</sup> in the Mexican coins seems to indicate the presence of an official who might have been tasked with executing Luis Rodríguez's post, as his lieutenant, while he took the necessary time to formulate his response in preparation for the arrival of the order.<sup>(72)</sup>



**Late Series 4 reales coin minted in Mexico with the mark of assayer S**  
(Coin image courtesy of Ponterio & Associates, Inc.)

Although not currently confirmed, the identity of this missing assayer S might be that of Pedro de Salcedo, an assayer by trade who had previously been employed as die-sinker at the mint,<sup>(73)</sup> who was now serving as the Overseer of the Mexican Silversmiths (*Veedor de los Plateros de Mexico*),<sup>(74)</sup> and who served as Miguel López de Legazpi's trustee when requesting the post of lieutenant treasurer of the mint in

1553,<sup>(75)</sup> a post he got. I must also add that the connection between Miguel López de Legazpi and Pedro de Salcedo is notable, as in 1536, prior to the death of Juan de Salcedo, Pedro de Salcedo's father, Miguel López de Legazpi was designated as the conservator (*curador*) of his son's inheritance<sup>(76)</sup> and later Pedro married Miguel López de Legazpi's own daughter.<sup>(77)</sup> So we now have that the lieutenant treasurer of the mint, Miguel López de Legazpi, had not only served as Pedro de Salcedo's tutor, but was now his father-in-law.

On June 26, 1554 the Attorney General of Mexico, Licentiate Alonso Maldonado, finally presented Prince Philip's 1552 Royal decree before the President and *Oidores* of the Mexican *Audiencia* and Chancellery. That same day Luis Rodríguez was notified of the order and told to obey it.<sup>(78)</sup> But Luis Rodríguez was not about to go quietly. On June 27, 1554 Luis Rodríguez appeared

before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* where he presented a masterfully crafted petition. Rather than challenge the argument that the posts of assayer and smelter were one office that could not be separated, Luis decided to agree with this claim while at the same time refocus the attention away from him by pointing out that since it was the office of assayer now being held by him the one named by the laws and decrees, the office that after the Treasurer was the most important, and among the most necessary, being this the post that carried the rights and salaries according to the laws, then it was clear that the true intention of the decree was to prohibit the separate use of the post of smelter. Now, since the post of smelter was a post that he did not currently have, he asserted that a notable error must have been committed when naming him, as the person that it really pertained to was Juan Gutiérrez, who was the one who had held and was still presently holding the post of smelter.<sup>(79)</sup>

After receiving and looking over Luis Rodríguez's petition, the *Audiencia* presented it to the Attorney General, Licentiate Maldonado. On July 3, 1554 the prosecutor (*procurador*) Juan de Salazar, in representation of Luis Rodríguez,<sup>(80)</sup> appeared before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* and demanded that Attorney General Maldonado provide a response to Luis Rodríguez's petition. The *Audiencia* agreed, asking that Maldonado provide his peremptory response by their next meeting, which was to be held on July 6. But the date came with no response from Maldonado, for which Juan de Salazar then asked and implored to His Highness that the matter be declared concluded and for justice to be made by returning the post of



**Statue of Miguel López de Legazpi in Zumarraga, Spain**

assayer to Luis Rodríguez. But the *Audiencia* gave Maldonado one more chance to respond, informing him, yet again, to provide his response by their next meeting.

On July 7, 1554 the *Audiencia* met again and this time Maldonado finally appeared. Maldonado now provided a petition in which he stated that the knowledge of this cause did not pertain to the President and *Oidores*, and as such, what Luis was requesting was a matter that was strictly being ordered to be determined by the Council of the Indies, to whom this should be remitted for them to impart justice. But Maldonado's warning did not stop the President and *Oidores* from continuing their deliberations, for which they now requested for the testimonies (*autos*) to be brought before them, so once viewed, they could administer justice.

On July 10, 1554, with the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* having concluded their discussions regarding the orders and testimonies, they pronounced their ruling stating that, while this affair was being passed on to His Majesty for consultation, they would order that nothing be done regarding the said assayer, and instead, it was the smelter of the mint who would be notified that from this moment forward he would no longer carry any rights as smelter. In addition, to ensure compliance, it was declared that this order would be notified to the officials at the mint, the merchants and other persons involved in bringing in silver to be coined. And so it was that on July 17, 1554 this decision was proclaimed and published in the presence of Attorney General Maldonado and Luis Rodríguez's representative, prosecutor Juan de Salazar.

But on July 20th, Attorney General Maldonado appeared before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia*, where he now appealed the new ruling requesting that it be revoked; again asking that the original decree be brought forth and its provisions followed by the members of the Mexican *Audiencia*. With this appeal in place, and while Maldonado's new petition was being presented to Salazar for his comments in representation of Luis Rodríguez, it was recommended that no further action be taken; technically putting the ruling in question on hold.

On July 28, prosecutor Juan de Salazar, on behalf of Luis Rodríguez, answered Maldonado's petition before the *Audiencia*, stating that the ruling of the *Audiencia* had been just in confirming his point of view regarding the true intent and will expressed and contained by the Royal decree, which was more than clear and well understood by the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia*, as was evident by the proclamation of their latest ruling. Salazar also pleaded that Maldonado's appeal regarding the original decree not be permitted, asking instead that His Highness be allowed to confirm and ratify the new ruling, so that in the fulfillment of justice full compliance could be received.

With Salazar's response to Maldonado's appeal, the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* considered again all the testimonies presented, meeting once more on July 31, where they ruled that even though Maldonado had filed an appeal, their review had confirmed the accuracy of their July 10th ruling, for which they would now proceed to order that this ruling be recorded, followed and implemented in the manner contained within it. As part of this judgment it was also ordered that an authorized report be given to Licentiate Maldonado containing what was enacted and provided regarding the original decree presented by him.

On the same day, following this judgment, the initial ruling was proclaimed again in the presence of Attorney General Maldonado, to whom it had been notified, and Juan

de Salazar, as Luis Rodríguez's prosecutor. With the ruling made public, on August 8th, Miguel López de Legazpi, the Lieutenant Treasurer of the mint, was informed and acknowledged hearing it, as witnessed by Antonio de Carvajal and García Calderón. Juan Gutiérrez followed, finally being notified in person on August 21st, with the court's scribes Juan de Guevara and Pedro de Requena serving as witnesses.

Also on August 21, 1554 Juan de Salazar went before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* where he presented a petition on behalf of Luis Rodríguez, assayer of the mint, saying that, pertaining to the litigation brought forth by the Attorney General about the known decree, this, as one of the Kingdoms of Castile, had viewed, reviewed and settled this litigation, for which he now pleaded and implored His Majesty's order that he be given the executory of the decisions.<sup>(81)</sup>

As an interesting turn of events, on August 23, 1554 prosecutor Juan de Salazar appeared before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia*, yet again. But this time he was no longer appearing as a representative of Luis Rodríguez, but of Juan Gutiérrez.<sup>(82)</sup> Salazar now presents Juan Gutiérrez's rebuttal of the ruling notified to him on August 21st, which was now blocking his rights to the post of smelter.

Salazar, in the name of, and by virtue of, the authority vested in him by Juan Gutiérrez, on the same day, said that the ruling presented to Gutiérrez was unjust and very damaging, and due to the concerns, gravity and injustice resulting from its passing, it should be annulled, amended and revoked by His Highness. Explaining his arguments, the following points were provided by Juan Gutiérrez through his representative:

1. That prior to the pronunciation of the ruling, he (Juan Gutiérrez) had not been called, heard, or even defeated in court, which was a required right in a case of such magnitude and importance.
2. That, having received the office of smelter from His Highness through his express command, the President and *Oidores*, talking with the proper right and compliance, were not judges to advise in this case or to pronounce such a harmful ruling against him. Also, that they should not have ordered that the rights to this post to be taken away from him, as he had held these rights since 15 years ago to present, and with the loss of these rights he had now seen his removal from the offices that His Highness had awarded him.
3. That the Royal decree for which the President and *Oidores* were basing their ruling did not pertain to him or name him, and as such, he should not be implicated in this matter.
4. And that, since the post of smelter of the mint is one of the most necessary that the mint should have, and the most important to the King's services and the good of the Republic, not having this post would result in the royal fifths (taxes) being defrauded in large sums and quantities and there would be a lack of control in the mintage of the coins, for which His subjects would also receive harm.

In conclusion, it was said that as he would copiously prove and it would be learned through the protestation of this cause, that Juan Gutiérrez should continue to have the rights to this post, as he had had in the past. Therefore, it was requested that justice be made by the annulment and rebuke of the previous ruling due to the reasons given above.

After receiving Juan Gutiérrez's petition, the *Audiencia* presented it on the same day to Attorney General Maldonado so that he could provide a prompt response. But, on August 25, 1554, when the *Audiencia* met again, Maldonado, who had previously expressed his disagreement in the *Audiencia's* interpretation of the original decree, had still not provided a response. So, prosecutor Salazar, making note of this, appeared before the President and *Oidores* and asked that, since Maldonado had been notified and given ample time to respond, which he had not, he then asked and implored His Highness that the matter be declared concluded and for justice to be made by returning the post of smelter to Juan Gutiérrez.

Having studied Salazar's petition the President and *Oidores* agreed and as requested declared the case closed; Attorney General Maldonado was then notified.

With this latest ruling Juan Gutiérrez was given back the rights to the post of smelter. But the matter was far from over. All these rulings had come from the Mexican court, and Spain had not yet reviewed them or made their final decision.

With the matter still undecided in Spain, Luis Rodríguez, being given eight months to appear before the Council of the Indies in person or by proxy, sent a representative, who again presented Luis Rodríguez's argument to the Council of the Indies, as it had been presented in Mexico. However, with the inherently slow progress of litigations in the Council of the Indies, it would take years before a final ruling was decreed.

The Council's examination revealed that their Attorney General, Licentiate Agreda, had erred in thinking that the office that Juan Gutiérrez had ceded to Luis Rodríguez was that of smelter. This prompted Agreda to declare that Luis Rodríguez could not use it or hold any rights to it, as the office of assayer and smelter was one office and not two.<sup>(83)</sup>

On August 26, 1558 the members of the Council of Indies, after reviewing the lengthy petitions regarding this complaint, ruled in favor of Luis Rodríguez, saying that it should be ordered, as it was ordered, that the title of assayer that was taken away and placed in this complaint should be reinstated back to him.<sup>(84)</sup> In contrast to the previous decree issued on December 18, 1552, the Council now said that if it was considered necessary, or if Luis Rodríguez requested it, a letter detailing the title could be provided to him, so that he could carry out this post as declared and ordered.

Regarding the office of smelter, it was said that since smelting was included under the office of assayer according to the laws and pragmatics of the Spanish realm, then, wrongfully, Luis Rodríguez was now being deprived of the rights derived from smelting.

Last but not least, as for Juan Gutiérrez, since he was the one who ceded the post of assayer to Luis Rodríguez, and the one who was now said to be pretending to have been left with the post of smelter, the Council of the Indies ordered that, rather than Luis Rodríguez, it was Juan Gutiérrez who should be linked with the previous decree and who should be ordered not to use the office of smelter.

Following the announcement of this judgment it was notified to Luis Rodríguez's representative and to Attorney General Agreda, who did not challenge it. After a short time had passed, still without being challenged, Luis Rodríguez's representative asked the Council of the Indies to provide him with an executory letter with the judgment, to which they agreed.

By decree signed in the Village of Valladolid on October 15, 1558 by Joanna (*Juana*) of Austria, Princess of Portugal, Regent of Spain and sister of King Philip II,<sup>(85)</sup> Luis Rodríguez got his executory letter in the form of a decree that said for Luis Rodríguez to use the office of assayer in all cases and things annexed to it, and ordered that all who saw the judgment from the Council of the Indies, which she was incorporating with it, to keep it, obey it and execute it in its entirety.<sup>(86)</sup>



**Doña Joanna of Austria  
Princess of Portugal, c. 1557  
by Alonso Sánchez Coello  
© Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao  
Nº Inv. 90/15**

But, while this was happening in Spain, news from Mexico had not yet arrived to let them know that on July 4, 1558 Juan Gutiérrez had passed away<sup>(87)</sup> in the town of Querétaro.<sup>(88)</sup> Alonso Gutiérrez, who had been serving the post of smelter for his brother at the mint for some time now, had received the renunciation to his brother's post on June 13, 1558.<sup>(89)</sup> But this was just the first step of the transfer, which still needed to be presented before the *Audiencia* of Mexico and the Royal Council of the Indies in Spain, for their consideration.

After his brother's death, Alonso went before the Town Council of Querétaro where Juan Sánchez Alanís, Deputy Mayor (*Teniente de Alcalde Mayor*) of the town and provinces of Querétaro and Jilotepec ("Xilotepeque"), conducted proceedings and gathered information from

witnesses to record this event. This testimonial was probably gathered for the Viceroy, Don Luis de Velasco, who later provided Alonso Gutiérrez with a commission and temporary appointment, so that he could continue working the post of smelter while the matter was presented to the courts.<sup>(90)</sup>

On April 4, 1559, by advice of his attorney, Alonso Gutiérrez appeared before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia* of Mexico in a public audience, bringing with him the copies of the proceedings and information gathered in Querétaro. With this information, Alonso also provided a list of character witnesses that could attest to him having the skill and competence to exercise the post ceded to him by his brother;

these witnesses were: Gabriel Díaz, Lieutenant Treasurer of the Mint; Francisco de Salazar and Juan Ramírez de Alarcón, both merchants; and Juan González de Arenas, a silver merchant of the Mint.



**Don Luis de Velasco y Ruíz de Alarcón**  
**2nd Viceroy of New Spain**  
**Oil on canvas, attributed to Simón Pereyns**  
**© Museo Nacional de Historia (Mexico)**

*Audiencia* of Mexico, upon request of the President and *Oidores*, brought out the original of the testimonies gathered, and after being corrected and discussed, this was then remitted to the Council of the Indies. It is probably around the time that these papers were being prepared for shipment that news arrived from Spain, informing the officials from Mexico of the 1558 ruling in favor of Luis Rodríguez, a ruling which would have displaced Alonso Gutiérrez whom we know to have then traveled to Spain at the time of this trial.<sup>(91)</sup>

On February 19, 1561, through a decree signed by King Philip II in Toledo, Luis Rodríguez was subpoenaed once again by the Council of the Indies. It seems that new questions had arisen about the provision that had granted the office of smelter to Luis Rodríguez in 1558, and now that Alonso Gutiérrez was attempting to claim this same

Following the public audience, on the same day, Alonso de Zorita, the Mexican *Oidor* who was given the responsibility to gather the needed information, appointed Juan Caro as the scribe who would record it. Then, Juan Caro, in turn, called Attorney General Maldonado to assist.

On May 17, 1559, all four witnesses were able to appear in Mexico before *Oidor* Zorita and Alonso Gutiérrez, where they provided testimony in response to nine questions asked in relation to a previous deposition provided by Alonso Gutiérrez. Nine days later, on May 26, 1559, Pedro de Requena, Scribe of the Chamber (*Cámara*) of the

office which had been left to him by his brother Juan, Luis was being asked to respond to Alonso's new protest.<sup>(92)</sup>

As we remember, the initial ruling in Luis Rodríguez favor had been based on the argument that since the posts of assayer and smelter had always been together, then, he should be given the appointment to the office of smelter, as he already had that of assayer. As part of this ruling it had been said that the office of smelter would not carry any additional rights, as it was part of the joint office of assayer and smelter.

But now this ruling was being disputed by Alonso Gutiérrez, who said that Luis Rodríguez had been given the previous provision without being understood that although the said offices of assayer and smelter had always been together, in this case these had been purposely separated. The separation of these offices was said to have occurred to prevent notorious grievances on Alonso Gutiérrez, who at the time was already working the post of smelter under an appointment given to him by his brother, Juan. It was also said, as part of this complaint, that it was necessary that the post of smelter be held by a person who did not occupy himself with any other office, and who should carry the rights as had been held by the predecessors of his brother Juan, as well as him, as not doing so would cause for the King's fifths and tenths (the Royal taxes) to be defrauded.

With the new arguments it was now said that the only reason why Juan Gutiérrez had ceded the office of assayer to Luis Rodríguez had been because in Juan Gutiérrez's conscience it was understood that he could not serve those two offices well, for which he then implored that by such renunciation, he be given the office of smelter, as otherwise it would be left empty, or to do as they saw fit.

Now, as it was done before, Luis Rodríguez was once again provided with a period of eight months in which to appear before the Council of the Indies, in person or by proxy, to present any argument he wanted considered. But, unlike last time, where it was only said that the eight months were to start from the moment that this order was presented to him, this time the decree was specific in saying that the period would begin from the day that the letter was notified to him, in person if possible, and if not, to the doorsteps of his house where it would be said or made known to his wife and children, if there were any, and if not, to one of his servants or neighbors, or to other neighbors nearby, so that they could know it and notify him, and with this, ignorance on his part would be prevented.

It is conceivable that this new order arrived in Mexico sometime in late 1561, and that this coincides with the appearance of a new assayer-mark, which was first identified by Mr. Francisco de Paula Pérez Sindreu as that of Bernardo de Oñate,<sup>(93)</sup> serving as lieutenant of Luis Rodríguez (this assayer chose as his assayer-mark the letter O). Although the earliest reference to date for Bernardo de Oñate working as the assayer on record at the mint during this time dates from 1564, it is likely that his participation as Luis Rodríguez's lieutenant began much earlier, as he had been working as his assistant since as early as 1550.<sup>(94)</sup> This new impending legal proceeding might have been what prompted Luis Rodríguez to finally promoted Bernardo to the status of lieutenant assayer, where he would have then been allowed to use his own identifying mark, while Luis could have then taken the necessary time to formulate a response to the new deposition.

The scarcity of information on this new trial prevents a further study. But Alonso Gutiérrez's return to Mexico in 1562 seems to indicate that the deliberations were fairly quick.<sup>(95)</sup> At the end it appears that Luis Rodríguez won the argument once again, as not only was there a presentation of his title, yet again, on September 10, 1565,<sup>(96)</sup> but we are told later that he was holding both posts by the time the office was sold, following Luis Rodríguez's death in 1569.<sup>(97)</sup>

The existence of over assayers coins, L/O and O/L, indicate that Bernardo de Oñate and Luis Rodríguez alternated back and forth during the last years of the pillars and waves coinage. This occurrence is explained by a portion of a testimony provided by Esteban Franco, the former assayer of the foundry, on January 14, 1568, which states that although Luis Rodríguez had previously served as the Mint's assayer himself, he was now serving this office through a lieutenant due to his ailments.<sup>(98)</sup> It seems that Bernardo de Oñate, having shown that he was a capable assayer, was called upon to take on the post of assayer as Luis Rodríguez's lieutenant, while Luis' health deteriorated.<sup>(99)</sup>



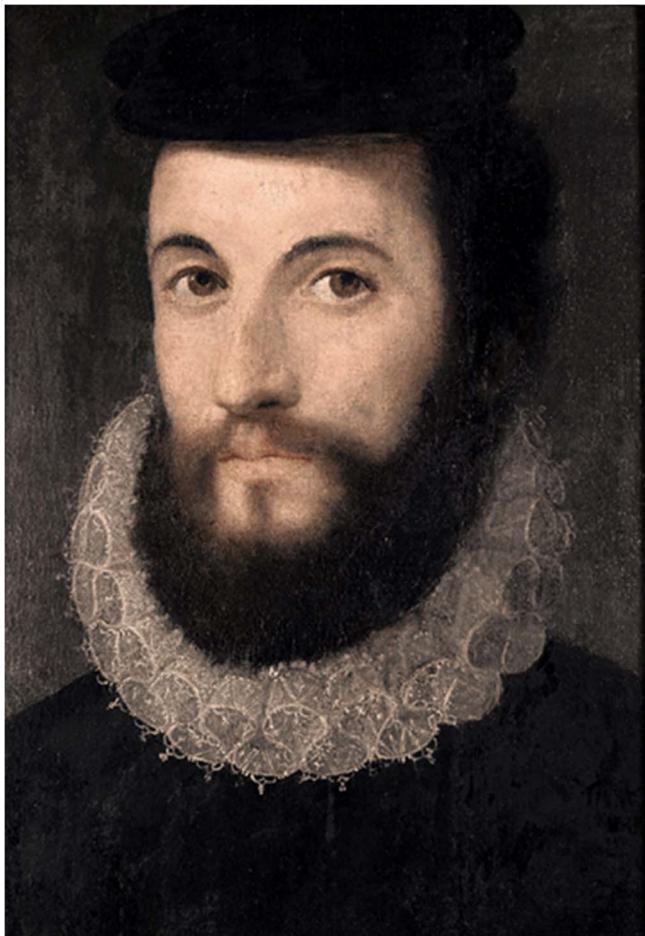
**Image A: - 4 reales coin - Assayer L over O**

**Image B: - 2 reales coin - Assayer O over L**

**(Images courtesy of Kent Ponterio)**

Luis Rodríguez health continued to decline, prompting him by the end of 1567 to present a renunciation of his office of assayer in favor of his 28-year-old son (his eldest), Cristóbal Rodríguez. Being presented before the President and *Oidores* of the *Audiencia*, this was read on December 22, 1567,<sup>(100)</sup> and shortly after, as was customary, one of its *Oidores*, Doctor Pedro de Villalobos, was tasked with interviewing witnesses that could attest to the merits and demerits of both Luis Rodríguez and his son Cristóbal; to Cristóbal's legitimacy as son of the legal marriage of Luis Rodríguez and Ana de Toledo; to Cristóbal's skill and competence to exercise the post of assayer being ceded to him by his father; and, if they could, to provide information on the current value of this office.

The Scribe, Juan López Tavera documented the statements from the witnesses testifying before *Oidor* Villalobos between January 14 and 16, 1568, and recorded the inquiry as concluded on January 26. Later, on March 28, 1568, Gordian Casasano, Scribe of the Chamber of the *Audiencia* of Mexico, upon request of the President and *Oidores*, brought out the original of the testimonies gathered, and after being corrected and discussed before the witnesses present, this was then remitted to the Council of the Indies in Spain.



**Prince of Éboli**  
**(Ruy Gómez de Silva, 1516-1573).** Seville,  
Collection of the Duke del Infantado  
Author: Anonymous  
Location: Private Collection, Seville, Spain  
Photo Credit: Album // Art Resources, NY  
Image: orz003865

individually, to see if separating them would bring more money.<sup>(104)</sup>

The Scribe, Juan de Cueva, wrote on December 15, 1569, that the office of assayer, about which he had previously sent information to the King, with the intent that it be passed on to Luis Rodríguez's son through the renunciation, had now been vacated by the death of Luis Rodríguez. The King had already sent correspondence to Juan de Cueva to let him know that this was already being discussed.<sup>(105)</sup> But now, with the death of the owner, Juan de Cueva was suggesting to the King several choices of what he could do with this office, including giving it to Cristóbal Rodríguez through the renunciation, after paying a healthy sum for it; renting it; talking to his friend Don Ruy Gómez de Silva, the Prince of Éboli,<sup>(106)</sup> so that he could request it, retain it, and benefit himself from its rents; or, if he chose, to sell it, for which Juan de Cueva said it to be worth as much as 15,000 ducats in Mexico.<sup>(107)</sup> Sending this notice, Juan de Cueva was sure the King would do what he liked most.

On December 19, 1569, Cristóbal Rodríguez, still seeking to procure the office of assayer, prepared a document of authority to ensure representation in Spain, assigning as his representatives: Alonso Puente de Herrera, Solicitor of Lawsuits (*Solicitador*

On November 26, 1569, with Luis Rodríguez now sick in bed and nearing the end of his life, the Scribe, Pedro Sánchez de la Fuente, went to his house where, again, he recorded Luis Rodríguez renunciation of the office of assayer on his son Cristóbal Rodríguez, a renunciation first presented to the *Audiencia* of Mexico in December 1567, asking that this be ratified so that with it Cristóbal could continue taking care of his mother and siblings.<sup>(101)</sup>

Luis Rodríguez died shortly after<sup>(102)</sup> whereupon, under a new Royal decree from August 21, 1565,<sup>(103)</sup> a direct transfer to Cristóbal Rodríguez was no longer guaranteed. Spain now had the right to determine the value of this office and then Cristóbal, if approved, would have to commit to pay this amount to the Spanish Crown. In addition to this, the Viceroy of Mexico, following what he saw as Spain's prerogative, decided to test the market, advertising the offices of assayer and smelter

*de Pleitos*) of the Council of the Indies; Alonso de Vides, neighbor of the city of Seville; and Antonio Rodríguez del Padrón, his brother.<sup>(108)</sup> As early as January 14, 1570 we start hearing from possible buyers,<sup>(109)</sup> while back in Spain, in 1570, King Philip II signed a decree on March 8 for the change in design of all coin dies for the New World<sup>(110)</sup> and on May 31st the Council of Indies officially notified the King of the passing of Luis Rodríguez through a letter written by the Mexican Viceroy, Martín Enríquez de Almansa, on January 20, 1570.<sup>(111)</sup>



**By decree of March 8, 1570, the design of the coinage of the Americas was changed to what is today referred to as the Habsburg Shield design. Pictured here are enlarged images of a 4 Reales of Mexico (Coin A), showing the new design used on the 8, 4, 2 and 1 reales denominations of Mexican coins, and a half real (Coin B) with the design of the monogram of the King's name (in place of the shield used on the larger denominations.)**

(Images courtesy of Daniel Frank Sedwick, LLC)

From the guidelines of the new decree, the new coins were now to bear as their new design on all 4, 2, and 1 reales<sup>(112)</sup>, on one side a crowned Habsburg Shield (the Arms of the reigning monarch), and on the other side castles and lions (the symbols of the kingdoms whose union was considered the building blocks for what later became known as the Kingdom of Spain.) Where the shield would have been, the half real incorporates the name of the king in the form of a monogram, with the same reverse as that of the other denominations.

Between March 18 and June 28, 1570, the sculptor Juan Paulo Poxini received payments for the new punches he was now ordered to prepare for the mints of Lima and Mexico.<sup>(113)</sup> We do not know when the notice of this change was received in Mexico, but Lima acknowledged receipt of theirs on April 24, 1571, and the new dies on March 1, 1572.<sup>(114)</sup> This has prompted many to accept the year of 1572 as the start of the shield-type coinage in Mexico as well. But since there is a greater distance between Spain and Lima than to Mexico, it is most likely that Mexico received the copy of the order and their dies prior to Lima, for which they could have started minting the coins with the new design by 1571.

In addition to this, it is also of interest to find that the shield-type coins produced in Mexico under the new decree of 1570 show the king's ordinal II in the legend, like the previous pillar-type coins of Lima, but the new shield-type coins of Lima (and later La Plata and Potosí) do not. Since the actual documents sent to Mexico and Lima about the new design have not been found, we do not know the reason for this disparity; but the document that gave Panama its mint (March 22, 1579),<sup>(115)</sup> which includes guidelines for the required legend, does in fact omit the king's ordinal as well. Therefore, it seems likely that the first draft of the order was made and sent to Mexico, possibly being received in late 1570 or very early in 1571, but then an accidental modification for the legend of the coinage of the Americas was instituted when the order was drafted at a later date for Peru.



**Don Martín Enríquez de Almansa  
Fourth Viceroy of New Spain  
Oil on canvas, artist unknown  
© Museo Nacional de Historia (Mexico)**

estimated to be worth some 25,000 ducats (when retained as assayer and smelter together.) After the split, the most that anyone was willing to offer for the post of assayer alone was only 16,000 ducats;<sup>(117)</sup> this being the offer made by the merchant Diego Alonso Larios on January 14, 1570, who wanted to purchase the office for his son with the same name.<sup>(118)</sup> At the end, not only was the office of assayer and smelter kept as one, but it was also agreed by the Viceroy that whoever did purchase it did not need to have the skill to work it himself and could exercise the post through a skilled lieutenant, further opening the pool of prospective buyers. With this in place,

By 1571, the office of assayer had sold in Mexico. Now Viceroy Martín Enríquez de Almansa writes to the King on April 4, 1571 with a summary of how things had gone with the sale of this office.<sup>(116)</sup> According to this letter, their attempt to split the office of assayer and smelter, and sell them as two separate offices, had been a failure. When Luis Rodríguez had previously won the argument that the post of smelter was part of that of assayer, it was agreed that being this the case, he should work the post of smelter without receiving any salary for it, as he was already getting a salary for the office of assayer. But now, splitting these two posts also meant that the post of smelter had to be given its own separate salary, which was said to amount to four maravedis per Mark of silver.

For this new salary to be justified, the salary of the assayer would now have to be lowered and this was creating serious problems with the sale of the office of assayer,

the office was now sold in 1571 to the Scribe, Juan de Cueva, for 29,100 ducats,<sup>(119)</sup> who in turn kept Bernardo de Oñate as his lieutenant, where he became the assayer in office at the time of the change to the coins with the new design decreed for the Indies in 1570. Bernardo de Oñate remained as the mint's working assayer until sometime after December 22, 1578,<sup>(120)</sup> when he was replaced by Luis de Oñate,<sup>(121)</sup> possibly his son,<sup>(122)</sup> who continued using the same assayer-mark O that his predecessor had used.

| THE ASSAYERS OF THE MINT OF MEXICO DURING THE<br>16th CENTURY PILLARS COINAGE, 1536-1571(?)   |                      |   |  |
|---|----------------------|---|--|
| Initial   | Name                 | Began on  | Left office on                             |
| R   | Francisco del Rincón | Apr. 1536   | Some time after<br>Mar. 22, 1538           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owner of the office: Pedro de la Membrilla (since Nov. 21, 1536).</li> <li>• His father, Gutiérrez Velasquez, councilman (<i>consejero</i>) of the Royal Council of the Indies, served as his administrative representative in Spain.</li> <li>• On Jul. 31, 1538 Francisco de Loaiza appointed as his representative in Mexico.</li> </ul>  |                      |   |  |
| P   | Pedro de Espina      | Succeeds assayer R in<br>the spring or summer of<br>1538            | Some time after<br>Oct. 22, 1541           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owner of the office: Pedro de la Membrilla.</li> </ul>   |                      |   |  |
| F   | Esteban Franco (?)   | Very brief interim<br>replacement for assayer<br>P in late 1541 (?) | Probably in late 1541<br>or early 1542 (?) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owner of the office: Pedro de la Membrilla.</li> </ul>   |                      |   |  |
| G   | Juan Gutiérrez       | Some time between<br>Dec. 1541-Feb. 1542 (?)                        | Fall of 1548                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owner of the office: Pedro de la Membrilla until Mar. 21, 1544, thereafter between Feb. 7 and Feb. 22, 1545. His father, Gutiérrez Velásquez, served as his administrative representative in Spain.</li> <li>• Hernando Gómez de Santillán replaced Francisco de Loaiza as Pedro de la Membrilla's representative in Mexico in 1543 (appointed on Sep. 29, 1543.)</li> <li>• Succeeds Assayer F sometime between Dec. 1541 and Feb. 1542 (?).</li> <li>• Office transferred to Francisco del Rincón on Mar. 21, 1544 (this sale was annulled on Jan. 7, 1545.)</li> <li>• Office was transferred to Juan Gutiérrez in 1545, for which he was confirmed as the owner in Spain on Feb. 22, 1545.</li> <li>• His brother, Alonso Gutiérrez, worked as his lieutenant since the Fall of 1548.</li> <li>• As owner, renounces the office of assayer in favor of Luis Rodríguez in Nov. 1548, but keeps (illegally?) the office of smelter.</li> </ul> |                      |   |  |

| Initial | Name  | Began on  | Left office on                             |
|---------|---|---|--|
| R       | Francisco del Rincón (?)<br>(cousin of first assayer)   | Probably in late 1544<br>(?)  | Probably in late 1544<br>or early 1545 (?) |
|         | • Owner of the office: Juan Gutiérrez<br>• Very brief interim replacement for assayer G, probably in late 1544 (?).   |   |  |
| A       | Alonso Gutiérrez  | Fall of 1548  | Before Nov. 8, 1548                        |
|         | • Owner of the office: Juan Gutiérrez.<br>• Arrives from Spain in the Fall of 1548 to assist his brother Juan.  |   |  |
| L       | Luis Rodríguez  | Nov. 9, 1548  | Before Jan. 14, 1568                       |
|         | • Office technically owned by Juan Gutiérrez until Luis Rodríguez was ratified by Spain on Oct. 15, 1549 (Luis Rodríguez as the owner thereafter.)<br>• Was first sworn in in Mexico on Nov. 9, 1548.<br>• By Jan. 14, 1568 we are told that he is no longer exercising the post (the post is being exercised through a lieutenant due to his ailments). It is possible that by 1564 Bernardo de Oñate had already replaced him as his full time lieutenant.<br>• Luis dies after a prolonged illness in late 1569.   |   |  |
| S       | Pedro de Salcedo (?)  | 1553 (?)  | 1553 (?)                                   |
|         | • Owner of the office: Luis Rodríguez.<br>• Apparently a brief, temporary replacement for Luis Rodríguez in 1553 (?).   |   |  |
| O       | Bernardo de Oñate   | Possibly in 1561 (?)<br>only and then starting<br>again in 1564 (?) | Some time after<br>Dec. 22, 1578           |
|         | • Owner of the office: Luis Rodríguez until sometime in late 1569.<br>• Oñate is best known for replacing the ailing Luis Rodríguez. He started working as an apprentice or assistant of Luis Rodríguez around 1550. It is possible that he served an early tenure as lieutenant of Luis Rodríguez in 1561 (?), and then worked again as lieutenant of Luis from 1564 (?) to 1569. After the death of Luis Rodríguez he was retained in office as the mint's working assayer. The ownership of this office remained vacant between 1569-1571. During this time the office was up for sale and the rents were collected by the Royal officials.<br>• In early 1571, Juan de Cueva becomes the owner, and retains Bernardo de Oñate as his working assayer (his lieutenant.)<br>• To date, the earliest documentary reference of Bernardo de Oñate the assayer on record at the mint is dated Jun. 4, 1564 and his latest Dec. 22, 1578.<br>• Mexico started minting coins with the Habsburg Shield design under this assayer (possibly as early as 1571.)<br>• His latest tenure ended around ca. 1580, when he was replaced by Luis de Oñate, who continued using the same assayer-mark O. Luis de Oñate is presumed to be the son of Bernardo. |   |  |

## Endnotes

(1) Archivo General de Indias (AGI): Patronato, 276, N. 4, R. 141; AGI: México, 1088, L. 1, F. 230r-231v. Both of these documents are dated at Bologna on March 20, 1530, and guarantee the title to both offices of the treasury for the mints that, as agreed, would be established in the cities of Mexico and Santo Domingo, to Don García Fernández Manrique (simply named in the documents as Don García Manrique), the Count of Osorno (*Conde de Osorno*).  
J. T. Medina. *Las Monedas Coloniales Hispano-Americanas*. Santiago de Chile, 1919, p. 119, footnote 9. I must acknowledge that the two documents above corroborate Antonio de Herrera's account, as documented in his *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano*, that the appointment given to the Count of Osorno (*Conde de Osorno*) had taken place in the year 1530. José Toribio Medina also acknowledged this in his monumental work of 1919, stating that: "Según Herrera, la determinación de fundar las Casas de Moneda de México y Santo Domingo, databa de 1530." But the accuracy of the date given by Herrera could not be established at the time of Medina's work, which forced this account to be included only as a simple footnote, rather than be given a more prominent place. Medina quotes Herrera as saying: "*En este mismo tiempo [hablando bajo el año 1530] habiendo el rey resuelto de poner Casa de Moneda en México y Santo Domingo, hizo merced de los oficios de tesorero dellas al Conde de Osorno, presidente del Consejo de Indias.*"

(2) AGI: Contratación, 5787, N. 1, L. 4, 12r-13r. This Royal decree from King Charles I granting Antonio de Mendoza with the titles of Viceroy and Governor of New Spain was signed in Barcelona on April 17, 1535.

(3) AGI: Indiferente, 415, L. 2, 352r-358v; AGI: Patronato, 180, R. 63. These duplicate sets of orders signed by King Charles I in Barcelona on April 25, 1535 are composed of twenty-seven (numbered) paragraphs. The order for Mendoza to establish a mint in Mexico is included in the seventh of these paragraphs.

(4) Archivo General de Simancas (AGS): Patronato Real (PTR), Leg. 26, Docs. 36-42 and 44. In preparations for his departure from Spain in 1535, King Charles I of Spain (also known as Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire) named his wife Queen Isabella of Portugal as his Spanish Regent under orders signed on March 1, 1535 in Madrid. She remained as Regent from March 1, 1535 until King Charles I's return to Spain in late 1536.  
AGS: PTR, Leg. 30, Doc. 10. For a list of Isabella of Portugal's Royal titles, among which was that of Empress and Queen, this May 1527 copy of her last will and testament can be reviewed. Since Isabella of Portugal had been recognized as Queen in Spain, the documents she signed during her Regency were signed with the simple customary phrase of "*Yo la Reina*" (I the Queen). This has created some confusion among many numismatic scholars today; who have erroneously identified the decrees for the establishments of mints in Mexico and Santo Domingo, dated in 1535 and 1536, respectively, as being signed by Queen Joanna, the mother of King Charles I. Although Joanna did retain her title of Queen until her death in 1555, this remained mostly titular as she had actually been declared mentally unstable and unable to govern shortly after the death of her husband Philip "the Handsome" of Austria (first member of the house of Habsburg to be King of Castile) in 1506.

(5) C. Pérez Bustamante, *Los Orígenes del Gobierno Virreinal en las Indias Españolas. D. Antonio de Mendoza. Primer Virrey de la Nueva España. (1535-1550)*. Anales de la Universidad de Santiago. Vol. III. Santiago, 1928, p. 27 (and footnote 3). This information is said to come from the book of proceedings of the Town Hall of Mexico – (*Actas del Ayuntamiento*).

(6) Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista, y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar, Vol. II, 1864, p. 192. In this letter to the King, dated December 10, 1537, Viceroy Mendoza wrote: “*Francisco del Rincon, questaba en esta tierra cuando yo á ella llegué, me presentó una carta de V. M., en que me mandaba le hubiese por encomendado para le nombrar á un oficio de los de la casa de la moneda; y por esto y por ser persona hábil yo le señalé por ensayador; y así mismo, entre los otros oficiales que para la casa se señalaron nombré por entallador á up Anton de Vides. Usan entramos sus oficios, que dudo hallarse otros en la tierra que mejor lo hagan; parescómo de hacer á V. M. relacion de ello, porque, á quitárseles á estos los cargos, no podría dejar la casa de resibir quiebra. V. M. haga lo que más sea servido.*”

A. F. Pradeau, *Don Antonio de Mendoza y la Casa de Moneda de México en 1543*. Documentos inéditos publicados con prólogo y notas. Biblioteca Histórica Mexicana de Obras Inéditas No. 23, México, Antigua Librería Robredo, 1953, p. 63; AGI: Justicia, 277, N. 5. It is of interest that during the Tello de Sandoval investigation, on June 5, 1545, Francisco del Rincón, the cousin of the first assayer by the same name, revealed that when the mint was first established he had served as the mint’s smelter by appointment from its Treasurer (so basically at the same time that his cousin, Francisco, was the mint’s assayer). From the original, Francisco del Rincón’s testimony is as follows: “*Preguntado q oficios y Cargos ha tenido este que declara En la dicha casa / dixo queste declarante al prencipio q se fundo la dicha casa de moneda / fue fundidor En ella cierto tiempo por nonbramyento del thesorero de la dicha casa...*”

(7) Superior Galleries, 1992. *The Paul Karon Collection of 8 Escudos and other Classic Latin American Coinage*, Public Auction Sale, December 11. New York, NY, Lot 138. A few 3 reales coins from the early series are known with waves beneath the pillars – the only coin type from the early series known with that feature which seems to have been experimental.



(8) Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista, y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar, Vol II (op. cit., n. 6.) The date of April 1536 is taken from the Viceroy’s letter of December 10, 1537, where he said that four months from this date it would be two years since the mint had started production.

(9) I. Bejarano, Cabildo de la Ciudad de México. *De las Actas de Cabildo del Ayuntamiento de la Gran Cibdad de Tenuxtitán México de la Nueva España*, paleografiado por el Lic. Manuel Orozco y Berra, Volumén 4, México, 1859, p. 20.

(10) Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista, y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar, Vol II, (op. cit., n. 6), pp. 193-194.

(11) AGI: México: 169, N. 6.

(12) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), p. 80; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6). During the Tello de Sandoval investigation, on June 9, 1545, the coiner (*monedero*) and foreman (*capataz*) of the

mint, Alonso Ponce, testified that: "...fue francisco del Rincon . que a ydo a españa  
*Ensayador en la dicha Casa y thenyente de thesoro...*" (Transcript from the original.)

(13) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), p. 48; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6.)

(14) *Oidor*: Title given to a royal judge appointed to serve as a member of one of the judicial tribunals known as *Audiencias*. Unlike in Spain, where the function of these judges was limited to judicial matters, in America they also held a wide range of executive and legislative powers.

(15) *Audiencia*: A Judicial tribunal established to administer royal justice. In Spanish Colonial America, this was one of the most important governmental institutions, taking care of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical matters.

(16) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), pp. 90-92; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6). The 1538 power of attorney given to Licentiate Francisco de Loaiza is included as part of a 1543 lease, only to show, textually, the power of attorney he was holding. This practice is pretty standard for the period. But, nonetheless, it has caused some to erroneously think that this document relates to an event from 1538, rather than 1543 (the year when it was being drafted.)

(17) K. Ponterio, *The Coinage of Mexico Struck During the Reign of Charles and Johanna*. Published in Ponterio and Associates Inc. Catalog, Public Auction Sale No. 150, Los Angeles, CA, August 8, 2009, pp. 144-146.

(18) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), p. 40; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6). During the Tello de Sandoval investigation Juan Gutiérrez mentioned on May 27, 1545 that by this date he had been residing at the mint for 6 years. Juan Gutiérrez's statement from the original is as follows: "...despues q este q declara Resyde en esta Casa de moneda q es de seys años a esta parte..."  
 AGI: Patronato, 284, N. 2, R. 1. Later, in 1554, Juan Gutiérrez made mention again of his 1539 mint involvement saying, while contemplating the possibility of losing his post as smelter in 1554, that he had been holding the rights to this office for 15 years up to now. Regarding this, Juan Gutiérrez said: "...no debieran mandarle quitar los derechos que por él le pertenecían y en que avía estado en costumbre de llevar de quince años a esta parte..."

(19) It is possible that when Juan Gutiérrez first started working at the mint he might have started as assayer's assistant or in the post of smelter, as Francisco del Rincón (the cousin of the first assayer) had done before him (for more on this see Pradeau endnote n. 6.) If the latter is the case, he would then have worked as smelter, starting in 1539, then, later, moving to the post of assayer. Although this is just a theory at the moment, it seems to be supported by Juan Gutiérrez, who in 1554, when discussing his rights to the post of smelter, said that he had been holding these for 15 years by this time (for more on this see AGI: Patronato, endnote n. 18, above.)

(20) AGI: México, 1088, L. 1 BIS, F. 149r-150r.

(21) Bejarano, Cabildo de la Ciudad de México. (op. cit., n. 9), p. 16.

(22) K. Ponterio (personal communication, October 3, 2013.)

(23) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), p. 48; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6.)

(24) Ponterio (op. cit., n. 22.)

(25) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), p. 37; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6.)

(26) A. F. Pradeau: *Casa de Moneda de México. Primeros Grabadores*, Revista de la Sociedad Iberoamericana de Estudios Numismáticos (S.I.A.E.N.), Año VIII, Núm. 31, Marzo-Abril 1958, pp. 48-49; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6). The Guard of the mint, Juan

de Santa Cruz, testified on June 2, 1545, during the Tello de Sandoval investigation, that Pedro de Salcedo had worked as die-sinker at the mint, prior to the arrival of Alonso del Rincón. Although Pedro de Salcedo was not called in the investigation to testify, he was in the city at the time of this investigation, for which he was commissioned on January 12, 1543 by the City of Council of Mexico to prepare a die with the letters MXO positioned vertically to stamp some textiles manufactured in Tenochtitlán Mexico, and later, on June 20, 1545, was named Examiner of the Weights and Scales (*Veedor de los Pesos y Pesas*) of the city of Mexico (these weights and scales were the ones used to weigh the gold and silver.)

(27) AGI: Justicia, 277, N. 4; A. M. Carreño, *Un desconocido cedulario del siglo XVI perteneciente a la Catedral Metropolitana de México*, Ediciones Victoria, 1944 - Mexico (Archdiocese.)

(28) AGI: Contratación, 5536, L. 5, F. 44r (4) (Juan Gutiérrez's License - May 19, 1537) and AGI: Contratación, 5536, L. 5, F. 46v (1) (Alonso Gutiérrez License - May 23, 1537.)

(29) AGI: Indiferente, 2048, N. 16. Pedro Rodríguez Murero, godfather (*saco de pila* = to stand sponsor, to be a godparent) of Juan and Alonso Gutiérrez testified in Fuensalida, Spain, in 1548 that both of them had left with the intent of traveling to the Indies; but at the end only Juan Gutiérrez traveled (notice when Pedro Rodríguez said that they had left some eight or nine years, this must be an error in recollection as not only does the licenses date from 1537, but a later deposition indicated that Juan Gutiérrez had lived some 22 years in Mexico by the time of his death in 1559.) His statement is as follows: *“el dicho pedro Rodríguez murero testigo presentado e aviendo Jurado en forma e seyendo preguntado por el tenor del dicho pedimiento dixo q Conoce al Dicho alonso gutierrez y Juan gutierrez y q sabe q son hermanos por qste testigo conocio a Sus padres y este testigo<sup>30</sup> saco de pila a los dichos alonso gutierrez y juan gutierrez...abra ocho /o nueve años pocos mas o menos q los dichos juan gutierrez y alonso gutierrez hermanos se partieron desta villa con proposito de pasar a las yndias...y se fueron con el dicho proposito y el dicho juan gutierrez paso y el dicho<sup>31</sup> alonso gutierrez se quedo ...”*  
 AGI: México, 205, N. 27. This document from 1559 states: *“...Juan gutierrez A mas de veynte y dos años que vino a esta nueva spaña...”*

(30) Ponterio (op. cit., n. 22.)

(31) Superior Galleries (op. cit., n. 7.)

(32) A. F. Pradeau, *Numismatic History of Mexico from the Pre-Columbian epoch to 1823* (New York, NY, 1978), p. 30. Updated reprint of original published in 1938, with annotations & revisions by Clyde Hubbard, Cuernavaca, Mexico, 1978; T. Dasí, *Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho* (Valencia, Spain, 1950), Vol. I, p. CCXXIII, No. 263. A Viceroyal order from Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, which is dated in Mexico on June 28, 1542, is said to include the addition of this new mintmark for Mexico. A portion of this transcript, included in Dasí, clearly describes this mark as: *“...una M devajo con una O encima del nombre de Mexico...”*

(33) G. Porras Muñoz, *La Fusión de la Factoría y la Veeduría de la Real Hacienda de México*. En Memorias del III Congreso de Historia del Derecho Mexicano. México 1984, pp. 535-536; S. Méndez Arceo, *La Real y Pontificia Universidad de México: antecedentes, tramitación y despacho de las reales cédulas de erección*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, Centro de Estudios Sobre la Universidad, 1990, pp. 80-81.

(34) Méndez Arceo (ibid, n. 33). Francisco de Loaiza arrived in Spain in November 1543.

(35) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), pp. 90-95; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6). The lease given to Juan Gutiérrez on January 17, 1543, with Alonso de Villaseca as his trustee, explains that the initial intent was to give this lease to a Francisco del Rincón. But, since the Viceroy of New Spain and the Treasurer of the mint did not approve him for this office, it was instead being given to Juan Gutiérrez, as not to leave the office vacant. At no point does the document say that these are events taking place in 1538. What has created this confusion is that as part of the legal process, Licentiate Francisco de Loaiza presented a copy, verbatim, of his 1538 power of attorney, and the rest is history.

(36) I say that his inexperience might have just been a perception of the Viceroy's and Treasurer's, as Francisco del Rincón, the cousin of the first assayer, had previously served as smelter of the mint, serving side-by-side with his cousin, and could have very well had the required skills and knowledge to serve as assayer himself. For more on this see Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6.)

(37) R. Martínez Baracs, *Convivencia y utopía. El gobierno indio y español de la "ciudad de Mechuacan" 1521-1580*. Mexico City: Fondo De Cultura Económica, 2005, p. 253; M. León-Portilla, *Códice de Coyacán – Nómima de Tributos, siglo XVI*; Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl, Volumen IX, 1971, publicación eventual del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, p. 63; AGI: Contratación, 5787, N. 1, L. 4, F. 123r-124r. Hernando Gómez de Santillán was appointed on March 1, 1543 as replacement for another *Oidor*, Alonso Maldonado.

(38) Gómez de Santillán (erroneously called Rodrigo) was previously thought to be assayer S. It seems that since Gómez de Santillán was given a power of attorney similar to that given to Francisco de Loaiza at an earlier date, it was believed that he could have worked the office himself, temporarily, while making the proper arrangements to transfer the office back to assayer G. But, not only do the coins of assayer S demonstrate that they were minted much later than previously believed, but Gómez de Santillán was a government official executing specific judicial duties and not a mint employee or an assayer for that matter.

(39) The *Oro de Minas* was worth 450 maravedis per Peso, whereas each ducat was equivalent to 375 maravedis. This makes 1500 Pesos in *Oro de Minas* equivalent to 1800 ducats.

(40) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), pp. 99-103; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6.)

(41) Alonso de Villaseca, as Juan Gutiérrez's trustee at the moment that the office was bought, had previously been proposed as a possible candidate for assayer A. But, not only does the Tello de Sandoval investigation clearly dismiss this idea, describing Alonso de Villaseca as a merchant who was bringing silver to the mint, but new information now shows that Juan Gutiérrez later called on his brother Alonso Gutiérrez, so that he could take on the post of assayer.

(42) AGI: Justicia, 1008. This document states: "...francisco del rrincon vecino dela dicha ciudad de mexico vino al dicho mi parte a le persuadír que le vendiese el dicho oficio de fundíor y ensayador y afirmandole que no avía alla quien le comprase y que no valía mas de quinientos y cinqüenta ducados..."  
 AGI (op. cit., n. 11). Letter to the King from Gutiérrez Velázquez, on behalf of his son, renouncing the post of assayer and smelter and requesting that this be transferred to Francisco del Rincón. Although this letter is undated, it is clearly drafted in connection with the 1544 sale, to ensure the issuance of the new title in Francisco del Rincón's name; event which we know to have taken place on March 21, 1544.

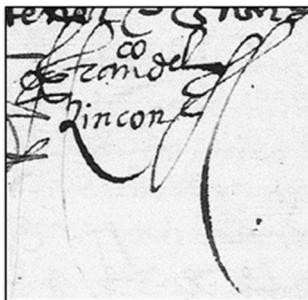
(43) R. I. Nesmith, *The Coinage of the First Mint of the Americas at Mexico City 1536-1572*, Reprint of original published in 1955 by the American Numismatic Society as

Numismatic Notes and Monographs #131, Rockville Centre, NY, 2001, pp. 18-19 (and footnote 27); *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar*, Segunda Series publicada por acuerdo de la Real Academia de la Historia, Tomo XVIII, V Consejo de Indias, Madrid, Spain, 1925, p. 65. Nesmith, who is said to have found the date of purchase of the office by Francisco del Rincón in the General Index of the papers in the Library of the Royal Academy of History, Madrid, Spain, erroneously documented this as occurring in 1543. In fact I have been able to examine the original of this General Index and the correct year is 1544. This is something that had been correctly published in 1925, when the Academy published its Index as part of the *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar*. The entry on the original of this Index, which corresponds to document 9/5705, f. 353v, states the following: (right margin) “1544” - (text): “A pedro de la Membrilla hijo del licenciado Gutierre Velasquez del Consejo se dio el oficio de ensayador y fundidor de la Casa de la moneda de Mexico el qual le renuncio en francisco del Rincon aquien se dio titulo a 21 de Março.”

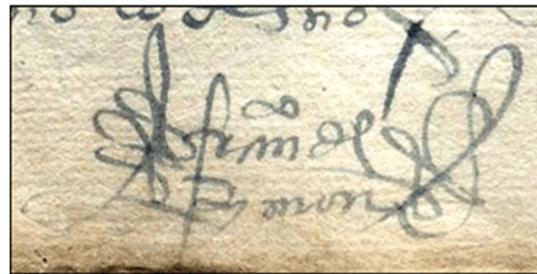
(44) K. Ponterio (personal communication, September 2, 2014). With no contemporary source that provides the year of mintage of the assayer R coins, I have relied on the direct observations of numismatic expert Kent Ponterio, to tentatively place their year of mintage in 1544. Kent Ponterio, who has studied these coins for many years, shared the following observations: “generally the crown used on top of the pillars for most R coinage is not used for A. The crowns are similar to some of the coins that fit into the middle of the late series G coinage.” Also: “stylistically the coins of R fit into a similar era as those of assayer A, but the planchet manufacture is not as good. In my opinion, the peak of planchet manufacture occurs during the time of the Tello de Sandoval investigation. This is when you get really well-made coins on fully round and broad planchets.” Taking Kent Ponterio’s observation, I immediately narrowed down the years of production to somewhere between 1542 and 1545, or somewhere between the times when the pillars and waves design started to be minted and the start of the Tello de Sandoval investigation. Furthermore, the difference in design in the crown above the pillars between the coins of assayer R and those of assayer A, further helped to narrow down their date of mintage. Since this is a die-sinker variation, and we know that Francisco del Rincón replaced his cousin Alonso as die-sinker in February of 1545, and he was still serving as die-sinker at the time that the coins of assayer A were minted; therefore, I suggest that the dies for assayer R could have been produced during the tenure of Alonso del Rincón (1542-1545), which might explain the difference. Now, since Kent Ponterio also noticed that the coins of assayer R fit around the middle of assayer G’s tenure, and that their style is similar in era to that of assayer A, then we can say that the dies for assayer R must then have been produced during the later years of work of die-sinker Alonso del Rincón. Now, since the Tello de Sandoval investigation mentions that Juan Gutiérrez, serving as assayer, was present at the mint on August 9, 1544 and February 17, 1545, and we also know that the transfer of the office of die-sinker from Alonso del Rincón to his cousin Francisco took place in February 1545, then I suggest that assayer R might have worked sometime between August 1544 and February 1545.

Kent Ponterio (personal communication, September 1, 2014). It should also be noted that the existence of 4 reales with L over R (over assayer-mark) have been documented. At this time this appears to be more of a curious anomaly, rather than anything else. As Kent Ponterio explains: “...it is one sole die that was recut by assayer L (i.e. sort of a one-off, although 4-5 examples exist.)”

(45) Nesmith (op. cit., n. 43), p. 25 (and footnote 44a). According to Nesmith, there was evidence that Francisco del Rincón was in Chachapoyas, Peru, in December, 1544. Nesmith states that this conclusion is based on a document from the Harkness Collection, Library of Congress, manuscripts Nos. II95 and II96, where he said that: “(t)he signature on this document is identical with that of Del Rincón on the TSI [Tello de Sandoval Investigation] papers.” If true, it would not have been possible for Francisco del Rincón to have served as the Mexican assayer R at virtually the same time. But comparison of the signature of Francisco del Rincón from the Harkness Collection Peruvian document with the signature of Francisco del Rincón (the Mexican Mint official) from the Tello de Sandoval investigation, just six months later, conclusively establishes that they are not the same person. The “Francisco del Rincón” working as the manager of mines in Peru in 1544 is not our Mexican die-sinker and perhaps assayer. We present the two signatures side-by-side for comparison. Careful inspections show that every letter is formed differently in the two signatures. Look especially at the F's and R's and the word “del”. The superscript above “Fran” resembles a (sloppily drawn) mathematical symbol for infinity on the Peruvian signature, while our Francisco executes a tight, sharp “co”. The elaborate flourishes to the left and right of the signature, which writers of this period practiced to deter the forging of their name, do not resemble one another at all.



**Signature of Francisco del Rincón**  
(AGI: Justicia, 277, N. 5:  
Tello de Sandoval Investigation)



**Signature of a different Francisco del Rincón (Document 1196 from the Harkness Collection, Library of Congress).**

(46) AGI: Justicia, (op. cit., n. 42). The letter from Gutiérrez Vélazquez procuring the services of Sebastián Rodríguez is dated in Valladolid on December 3, 1544.

(47) This was equivalent to the 1500 Pesos in *Oro de Minas* that Juan Gutiérrez had agreed to pay for this office. (For more on this see endnote No. 39.)

(48) AGS: PTR, Leg. 26, Docs. 67-78 and 83-88. Departing Spain in 1543, King Charles I of Spain named his son Prince Philip as his Spanish Regent under orders signed in Barcelona on May 1, 1543. Philip, the future king of Spain, remained as Regent between 1543 and 1548.

(49) AGI: Justicia, (op. cit., n. 42.)

(50) AGI, (ibid, n. 49.)

(51) *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista, y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar*, (op. cit., n. 43), p. 66; Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Índice General de los Papeles del Consejo de Indias, document 9/5705, f. 353v. The entry on the original of the General Index of the papers in the Library of the Royal Academy of History, Madrid, Spain, states the following: (right margin) “1545” - (text): “El oficio de Ensayador y fundidor q el licenciado Gutierrez Velasquez renuncio d Pedro de la Membrilla su hijo en francisco del Rincon este le bolvio a renunciar en el dicho Pedro de la

*Membrilla al qual se dio titulo a 7 de febrero y luego el dicho lic. Gutierrez Velasquez le bolvio a renunciar en Juan Gutierrez y se le dio titulo a 22 de febrero.”*

(52) Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista, y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar, (ibid, n. 49); Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, (ibid, n. 51). The entry in the Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista, y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar, when compared to the original, has one error in that it should say February 22, rather than 20.

(53) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), p. 53; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6). During the Tello de Sandoval investigation, the following was recorded: “*El oficio de ensayador de la dicha casa / dixo que es del licenciado gutierrez velazquez /o de su hijo / E que al presente · lo usa Juan gutierrez Ensayador por Renunciacion q en el hizo El licenciado gomez de santillana /oydor desta Real abdiencia en nonbre y con poder del dicho licenciado gutierrez Valazquez E q primero antes de la dicha Renunciacion lo tubo por aRendamiento el dicho Juan gutierrez...*” (Transcript from the original.)

(54) AGI, Indiferente (op. cit., n. 29.)

(55) AGI, (ibid, n. 54.)

(56) AGI, (ibid, n. 54.)

(57) AGI: Indiferente, 1964, L. 10, F. 364r.  
AGI, México (op. cit., n. 29). Testimonies provided in this proceeding from early 1559 further confirm the arrival of Alonso Gutiérrez in Mexico around mid-1548, as one of the questions asked, for which a number of witnesses were able to confirm that it was true, was if they knew that it had been more than 22 years since Juan Gutiérrez had arrived in Mexico, and more than 10 years for Alonso Gutiérrez (this as of April 1559.) To this, the original document states the following: “...dicho Juan gutierrez A mas de veinte y dos años que vino a esta nueva spaña y el dicho alonso gutierrez mas de diez...”

(58) J. Olivella Gener, *Karolvs et Iohana. Carlos y Juana. La Ceca de México 1536-1557*, 2010, pp. 8 and 46, disponible en: <http://ebookbrowsee.net/karolvs-et-ihohanna-1536-1557-pdf-d145308411>.  
It is important to mention that Mr. Joan Olivella in 2010 proposed that assayer A could be Alonso Gutiérrez, saying: “I believe that the letter ‘A’ corresponds to Alonso Gutiérrez, brother of Juan Gutiérrez... According to the document ES.41091.AGI/1.16403.13.205//MEXICO,205,N.27 from the General Archive of the Indies, it describes that Alonso Gutiérrez took the office by resignation of his brother Juan Gutiérrez, more than twenty days before he died.” (“*Yo creo que la letra ‘A’ corresponde a Alonso Gutiérrez, hermano de Juan Gutiérrez... Según el documento ES.41091.AGI/1.16403.13.205// MEXICO,205,N.27 del Archivo General de Indias, se describe que Alonso Gutiérrez asume el cargo por renuncia de su hermano Juan Gutiérrez más de veinte días antes de morir.*”) But, Mr. Olivella, who at the time only transcribed small portions of the front page of this 1559 document, had hoped that this document would be the key to unlocking this mystery; a fact that he acknowledged by saying: “with time and patience this transcript will be finished, and we will see if the office of assayer and smelter was awarded to him.” (“*Con tiempo y paciencia se acabará esta transcripción, y veremos si se le concedió el oficio de Ensayador y de Fundidor*”) In fact, this is not the case as the document mentioned by Mr. Olivella has nothing to do with the office of assayer, and only pertains to the office of smelter, which was the only office still being held by Juan Gutiérrez at the moment of his death.

(59) AGI: México, 209, N. 58. A portion of Esteban Franco's testimony, dated January 14, 1568, states: "...luis Rodriguez estubo en compañía deste testigo en la casa de la fundición desta ciudad de mexico donde le ayudava y hera y heran Compañeros y despues a thenydo el oficio de la casa de la moneda desta ciudad sirbiendo en ella de ensaydor e a puesto thenyente por sus enfermedades..."

(60) AGI: México, 169, N. 15.

(61) AGI, (ibid, n. 60.)

(62) AGI, Patronato (op. cit., n. 18.)

(63) AGS: PTR, Leg. 26, Docs. 100-112. Archduke Maximilian (son of Ferdinand I, King of Bohemia, Hungary and Croatia and of Anna of Bohemia and Hungary) and Archduchess María of Austria (daughter of King Charles I of Spain and of Isabella of Portugal), acted as Regents of Spain between September 29, 1548 and June 22, 1551, while King Charles was occupied with German affairs, and Prince Philip was absent traveling in Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. During this period of regency, the Grand Inquisitor (*Inquisidor General*) and Archbishop of Seville, Fernando de Valdés Salas, was left in charge of handling the matters that pertain to the Holy Office (*asuntos del Santo Oficio*.)

(64) *IV Jornadas Científicas Sobre Documentación de Castilla e Indias en el siglo XVI*. Galende Díaz, Juan Carlos (Director), Cabezas Fontanilla, Susana and Royo Martínez, María del Mar (Editores), de Francisco Olmos, José María and de Santiago Fernández, Javier (Coordinadores). Departamento de Ciencias y Técnicas Historiográficas, Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Section titled "*Las misivas reales durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVI: Historia, Diplomática y Cultura Escrita a través de la correspondencia de la Emperatriz María de Austria*" Por Juan Carlos Galende Díaz y Manuel Salamanca López, Madrid, España, 2005, p. 165. Herein the authors write: "...la conveniencia de delegar el poder en las personas de Maximiliano y María, cuyo matrimonio estaba ya concertado, y que tendría lugar el 13 de septiembre de 1548, otorgándoles en la primavera de 1549 el título de «Reyes de Bohemia». Con todo, éste será un título de carácter meramente honorífico, debiendo esperar hasta el 20 de septiembre de 1562 para ver coronado a Maximiliano como rey de Bohemia, y al día siguiente a su mujer."

*La Corte de Carlos V*. Vol. 1, Tomo 2: "*Corte y Gobierno*". Martínez Millán, José and de Carlos Morales, Carlos Javier (coord.). Chapter 14 titled *La proyección del príncipe Felipe. Viajes y regencias en la corte hispana*, Madrid, Spain, 2000, p. 209. Regarding when Charles I of Spain signed the order authorizing the Regency of Maximilian and María and when they received the initially honorary title of "Rulers of Bohemia" (*Reyes de Bohemia*), the author writes: "El 29 de septiembre de 1548, en Bruselas, Carlos V firmó los poderes e instrucciones que debían conducir la regencia de su hija y su sobrino, titulados reyes de Bohemia desde febrero del año siguiente, y designaba las personas que compondrían los distintos consejos les habrían de asistir en el gobierno."

(65) Joanna (*Juana*), the daughter of Queen Isabella I (*Isabel I*) of Castile and King Ferdinand II (*Fernando II*) of Aragón and mother of King Charles, was proclaimed Queen of Castile, León and Granada after her mother's death (d. 1504), a title that she retained until her death in 1555. After King Ferdinand's death (d. 1516) Charles and Joanna were proclaimed as co-rulers of Spain in 1517. But Queen Joanna's title was mostly titular as she had been declared mentally unstable and unable to govern shortly after the death of her husband Philip "the Handsome" of Austria in 1506. During the remainder of her life Queen Joanna was kept confined at the Santa Clara Convent in Tordesillas, near Valladolid in Castile, Spain, first by her father King Ferdinand, and later by her son King Charles. But, despite her confinement, King

Charles did continue to consult with her and maintained the pretense of joint rule with his mother, for which, both their names appear on the coins minted in the Americas.

(66) AGS: C.J.H., leg. 76, fols. 55 y 56; AGS: C.J.H., leg. 89, fol. 80. (Credit for the discovery of these documents goes to Mr. Glenn Murray.)

(67) de Herrera y Tordesillas, Antonio. *Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano o “décadas”* (Edición de Mariano Cuesta Domingo.) Madrid, Universidad Complutense, 1991. Reprint of the 1601 edition, Tomo I, p. 241. Although the documents studied only identify this official as Licentiate Agreda, his full name has been verified through the list of Attorney Generals of the Council of the Indies provided by Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas; historiographer of the Indies and Castile appointed in 1592 by King Philip II.

(68) AGI: México, 205, N. 7. This document states: “...el licençiado agreda fiscal de su magestad en el su consejo rreal de las yndias me ha hecho rrelacion quel dicho luys Rodriguez gano la merced/ (por) Subrreçion y no verdadera rrelacion porque en rrealidad de verdad no q tal /oficio en la dicha casa ni le A avido en ella sino solamente de ensayador el qual y de fundidor hera una misma cosa E no dos oficios...” An added word of advice for those who wish to read the original legajo: there is a mix-up of the images for this legajo. The correct order should be: images 1-4, followed by 11-12, then 7-10, now followed by 5-6, and finally 13-17.

(69) AGS: PTR, Leg. 26, Docs. 93, 96 and 121-125. Prince Philip resumed as Regent upon his return to Spain under orders signed on June 22 and 23, 1551. During this period of regency the Grand Inquisitor (*Inquisidor General*) and Archbishop of Seville, Fernando de Valdés Salas, continued in charge of handling the matters that pertain to the Holy Office under a new signed order. This regency lasted until the beginning of July 1554, when Philip traveled to England for his marriage to Queen Mary I of England and Ireland, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine (*Catalina*) of Aragón, King and Queen of England.

(70) AGI, (op. cit., n. 67) and AGI, Patronato (op. cit., n. 17.)

(71) D. Sedwick and F. Sedwick, *The Practical Book of Cobs*. 4th Edition, (Winter Park, FL, 2007), p. 64. Herein Daniel Sedwick writes: “Die details indicate that the coins of assayer S fit in between two tenures of assayer L and must have been made around 1553-1554, since assayer-S specimens were recovered from the 1554 Fleet off Padre Island, Texas, but *not* from a late-1549s/circa-1550 wreck that yielded many specimens of the other assayers at the time (G, R, A, and L.)”

(72) AGI, México, 210, N. 30. Although we know that by this time Bernardo de Oñate was already assisting Luis Rodríguez with the post of assayer, it might have been deemed that he did not yet have the skills needed to take on the post without supervision himself, as we know that he was not called upon at this early stage. As mentioned before, no assayer-mark O specimens were recovered from the 1554 Fleet off Padre Island, Texas. (For more on this see endnote 93.)

(73) Pradeau (op. cit., n. 6), pp. 58-59; AGI, (op. cit., n. 6); AGI: México, 204, N. 40. The Guard of the mint, Juan de Santa Cruz, testified on June 2, 1545, during the Tello de Sandoval investigation, that Pedro de Salcedo had worked as die-sinker at the mint, prior to the arrival of Alonso del Rincón. Also, Pedro de Salcedo’s early involvement in the mint is confirmed by several witnesses who provided testimony to his prior services between October 1552 and January 1553.

(74) M. J. Sarabia Viejo, *Don Luis de Velasco, Virrey de Nueva España, 1550-1564*. Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1978, p. 103, footnote 76. The

date Pedro de Salcedo is given the title of Overseer of the Mexican Silversmiths is provided herein as follows: "L. C., Hans P. Kraus Coll., Item 140, fols. 56vto.-57.—Nombramiento de Pedro de Salcedo como veedor de los plateros de México, 13 de marzo de 1551."

(75) J. García Mendoza, *La formación de grupos de poder en la Provincia de la Plata en el siglo XVI*. Unpublished thesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) (México D. F., México, 2002), p. 181 (and footnote 512). Mr. García Mendoza writes: "Pedro de Salcedo tuvo relación con su suegro, de quien fue fiador, cuando este solicitó el oficio de tesorero de la Casa de Moneda." Footnote 512: "El 19 de agosto de 1553, Pedro de Salcedo quedó como fiador de Miguel López de Legazpi, su suegro, quien había solicitado el oficio de tesorero de la Casa de la Moneda AGNM, Archivo Histórico de Hacienda, v. 1505, f. 49v; SDHNCM-AGN, Pedro Sánchez de la Fuente, 1547-1577, Nº 266, fs. 627-628."

AGI, (op. cit., n. 67). The presence of *Miguel López de Legazpi* as the Treasurer of the Mint of Mexico is further confirmed by this document from the General Archive of the Indies, which includes: "*En la ciudad de mexico /ocho dias del mes de agosto de myll E quinientos E cinquenta E quatro años notifique el auto desta otra parte contenido y le de bista en esta causa pronunciados a miguel lopes de legaspi tesorero de la casa de la moneda...*"

(76) García Mendoza (ibid, n. 75), p. 70. Mr. García Mendoza writes: "*Juan de Salcedo también entabló una relación de amistad con Miguel López de Legazpi, minero de Tasco y escribano del Cabildo de México. Antes de morir Salcedo en 1536, nombró a López de Legazpi como curador de su hijo Pedro de Salcedo.*"

(77) García Mendoza (ibid, n. 75), pp. 70-71 and 179. On page 179 Mr. García Mendoza writes: "*Pedro de Salcedo, el hijo de Juan de Salcedo y de Leonor de Pizarro, contrajo matrimonio con Teresa Garcés, hija de su tutor el adelantado de las Filipinas, Miguel López de Legazpi...*"

(78) AGI, (op. cit., n. 68.)

(79) AGI, (op. cit., n. 68) and AGI, Patronato (op. cit., n. 17.)

(80) AGI, (op. cit., n. 68). The contract between prosecutor Juan de Salazar and Luis Rodríguez, dated June 27, 1554 was presented before the *Audiencia* on July 6, 1554.

(81) AGI, (op. cit., n. 68). The document states: "...*pido y suplico a vuestra alteza mande que se me de executoria de los autos...*"

(82) AGI, (op. cit., n. 68). The contract between prosecutor Juan de Salazar and Juan Gutiérrez, dated August 23, 1554 was presented before the *Audiencia* on this same day.

(83) AGI, Patronato (op. cit., n. 18.)

(84) AGI, (ibid, n. 83.)

(85) AGS: PTR, Leg. 26, Docs. 129-133, 135 and 137-139; AGI: Patronato, 170, R. 55. Joanna (*Juana*) of Austria, Princess of Portugal, became Regent of Spain and the Indies in 1554 under orders from her father, King Charles I of Spain, dated March 31, April 1 and July 12 of that year.  
AGS: PTR, Leg. 17, Doc. 65 (Cesión del feudo de Sicilia); AGS: PTR, Leg. 42, Doc. 12 (Cesión del Reino de Nápoles); AGS: PTR, Leg. 42, Doc. 24 (Cesión del Reino de Sicilia Ulterior); AGS: PTR, Leg. 26, Docs. 162 and 165 (Cesión de los Reinos de Castilla y Aragón, respectivamente). On June 15, 1554 King Charles and his mother Queen Joanna abdicated the Kingdom of Naples and certain lands in Sicily on Prince Philip. King Charles further abdicated on him the Netherlands on October 25, 1555

and the remaining kingdoms in Sicily, Spain and his overseas possessions on January 16, 1556. Philip was officially proclaimed in Valladolid in 1556 as King Philip II of Spain, while he was in the Netherlands.

AGS: PTR, Leg. 26, Docs. 141 and 149-152. After her brother's ascension to the throne Princess Joanna continued to serve as his Regent of Spain and the Indies under new orders drafted by the now King Philip II of Spain in January 17, 23 and 28, 1556. This period of regency lasted until August 2, 1559 when King Philip II returned to Spain from the Netherlands.

- (86) AGI, Patronato (op. cit., n. 18.)
- (87) AGI, (op. cit., n. 29.)
- (88) Situated on the Mexican Plateau at an elevation of about 6,100 feet (1,860 meters) above sea level, Santiago de Querétaro, commonly referred to simply as Querétaro, is located 213 kilometers (132 miles) northwest of Mexico City. According to tradition, the Spaniards founded their town on the site of a pre-colonial Otomí settlement, which they renamed Santiago de Querétaro on July 25, 1531.
- (89) This was well within the requirements of the Spanish laws, which required that for a transfer to be considered, a title holder must cede his post to a capable individual more than 20 days prior to his death.
- (90) AGI, México (op. cit., n. 29.)
- (91) L. Romera Iruela, and M. del C. Galbis Díez, *Catálogo de Pasajeros a Indias-Siglos XVI, XVII, XVIII.* Vol. IV (1560-1566), Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos; Archivo General de Indias, 1980. p. 198, No. 1590 and p. 287, No. 2354. AGI: Contratación, 5537, L. 2, F. 184v and F. 253v. Although we do not know the date that Alonso Gutiérrez traveled from Mexico to Spain, we do know that he was in Spain at the same time this trial took place through the book of passengers to the Indies, which shows him attempting to return to Mexico in November of 1561 (his license is recorded on November 3, 1561). Not able to make this trip in 1561, his license was then reinstated on March 12, 1562.
- (92) AGI: Patronato, 286, R. 33.
- (93) J. Pellicer i Bru, *Glosario de Maestros de Ceca y Ensayadores (Siglos XIII-XX).* 2nd Edition. Madrid, 1997, p. 285; AGI, (op. cit., n. 72). The identity of this assayer has been known since the discovery of a reference from June 4, 1564 by Mr. Francisco de Paula Pérez Sindreu (AGI: Escribanía, 272A). This has now been further confirmed by the author through a later document where he was providing testimony as assayer of the mint on December 22, 1578 (AGI: México, 210, N. 30). The earlier reference from June 1564 identifies Bernardo de Oñate as the assayer on record at the mint by this date.
- (94) AGI, (op. cit., n. 72). Enquiry by request of the Treasurer of the Mint, Francisco de Quintana Dueñas, regarding the convenience of having black workers in charge of beating the metal for coining at the mint ("yntificacion hecha a pedimiento del thesorero de la casa dela moneda de mexico antel Virrey en diciembre 1578 sobre q conviene q haya negros braçajeros en la casa y que no se quiten/".) As part of this enquiry, Bernardo de Oñate was called upon to testify on December 22, 1578, where he said that he had been assaying silver at the mint for some 28 or 29 years prior to this date. Since no assayer-mark O specimens were recovered from the 1554 Fleet off Padre Island, Texas, then we have a clear indication that Bernardo de Oñate must have first started as an apprentice and/or assistant of Luis Rodríguez, then being promoted to the status of lieutenant at a later date. Bernardo's testimony is as follows: "...en la dicha. ciudad de mexico en este dicho dia Veinte y dos de

*deçienbre del dicho año (1578)...presento por testigo a bernardo de oñate ensayador de ladicha Casa... (referente a los dichos negros) se ha entendido ser necesario bolber a la dicha casa para que trabajen y ayuden al despacho como de presente lo hacen y esto es muy notorio en la dicha Casa y entre las personas que dello tienen. noticias como este testigo que ha sido ensayador y ha ensayado plata en la dicha casa del dicho tiempo de veinte y ocho) o veinte y nueve años aesta parte y es la verdad para el Juramento q ffecho tiene y firmolo de su nombre que es de edad de çinuenta y cinco años antes mas que menos..."*

- (95) Romera Iruela, and Galbis Díez, (op. cit., n. 90), p. 198, No. 1590 and p. 287, No. 2354; AGI: Contratación, 5537, L. 2, F. 253v.
- (96) AGS: C.J.H., leg. 76, (op. cit., n. 66); AGS: C.J.H., leg. 89, fol. 80. (Documents discovered by Glenn Murray.)
- (97) AGI: México, 19, N. 58 (Mexico, April 6, 1571). This document states: “*El oficio densayador se vendió en veinte y nueve mil y cien ensayador ducados como lo tenía Luys Rodriguez que Juntamente usava del oficio de fundidor sin derechos...*”
- (98) AGI (op. cit., n. 59). A portion of Esteban Franco’s testimony, dated January 14, 1568, states that Luis Rodríguez held the office of assayer at the mint which he had worked, but was now exercising through a lieutenant due to his ailments (for the textual Spanish explanation see endnote 59). On this same date Martín de Gaona also alluded to the fact that by now Luis Rodríguez was no longer working the post of assayer himself, as he says that he had seen him exercising the office “at the time he was healthy”. *Gaona’s testimony reads: “...en el oficio de ensayador dela Real casa . dela moneda desta ciudad de mexico en el tiempo que estuvo sano el dicho luis Rodriguez el a visto este testigo serbir bien y fielmente...”*
- (99) L. Romera Iruela and M. del C. Galbis Díez, *Catálogo de Pasajeros a Indias-Siglos XVI, XVII, XVIII.* Vol. V (1567-1577). Tomo I (1567-1574), Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos; Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain, 1980. p. 95, No. 612. AGI: Contratación, 5537, L. 3, F. 242v. News of Luis Rodríguez decline in health might have prompted another one of Luis Rodríguez sons, Antonio Rodríguez del Padrón, to travel to Mexico in June of 1567 (his license to travel is dated June 19, 1567). The connection of this individual to the mint’s assayer is certain. His license includes that he was an inhabitant of Mexico, son of Luis Rodríguez and Ana de Toledo.  
AGI, (op. cit., n. 59). This document confirms that Ana de Toledo was the wife of Luis Rodríguez, the assayer. We further know that by December of 1567 Luis Rodríguez was already sick, as he mentions this in a document from AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 255 and that Antonio Rodríguez del Padrón was brother of Cristóbal Rodríguez, the pretender to the post of assayer after Luis Rodríguez’s death, as this is mentioned in AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 257. (The last two documents from AGS mentioned here were discovered by Glenn Murray.)
- (100) AGI, (op. cit., n. 59.)
- (101) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 255.
- (102) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, fol. 257; AGS: C.J.H. leg. 109, núm. 1 (sin folio) – These two documents were found by Glenn Murray. Although it has been previously published that Luis Rodríguez died on January 14, 1570, this is not correct. On AGS: C.J.H. leg. 109, núm. 1, the Scribe, Juan de Cueva, informs the King that the office of assayer had been vacated by the death of Luis Rodríguez (Juan de Cueva dates this portion of his letter on December 15, 1569). In addition to this, on December 19, 1569, Cristóbal Rodríguez also tells us that Luis Rodríguez had already passed away by this date: “...Xpobal Rodríguez, vezino que soy desta gran ciudad de México

*desta Nueva España, hijo legítimo de Luys Rodríguez, difunto, que esté en gloria, ensayador que fue por Su Magestad de la Casa de la Moneda desta dicha ciudad...”*

(103) *Las Casas de Moneda de los Reinos de Indias*. Vol. 2: “*Cecas de Fundación Temprana*”. Dirigido por Anes y Alvarez de Castillón, Gonzalo y Céspedes del Castillo, Guillermo. Capítulo titulado La Época de Gestión Delegada, 1535-1572, Por Agustín Pineda Aguilar, Madrid, España, 1997, p. 54. This book states: “Treinta años después de fundada la casa mexicana y de haberse creado sus oficios, una R.C. de 21 de Agosto de 1565, mandó que los mayores y menores pudieran venderse, según fueran vacando los titulares en turno (lo eran hasta su muerte), beneficiándose la Corona con el producto total de aquellas ventas.” With this new decree of 1565, the crown now needed to establish the price of the office, as, the person who the office was ceded to, if approved, was responsible for paying the Crown the price specified, if agreed upon. If no agreement was made, then the office could be put up for sale to the highest bidder at public auction.

(104) AGI, (op. cit. n. 97.)

(105) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 109, (op. cit. n. 102.)

(106) Don Ruy Gómez de Silva, the 1st Prince of Éboli, was born on October 27, 1516 in Chamusca, Portugal, the son of Portuguese nobility. He came to Castile in 1526 as part of the entourage of the *Infanta Isabella (Isabel)* of Portugal, who traveled to Castile for her marriage to King Charles I of Spain (also known since 1519 as Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire). He served as a page to the infant Prince Philip (the future King Philip II), becoming Philip's friend and one of his main advisers. Although Philip did not bestow him with the office of assayer of the Mexican Mint, he did elevate him to grandee status as Duke of Pastrana in 1572. Ruy Gómez died in Madrid, Spain, on July 29, 1573.

(107) It can be presumed that when Juan de Cueva quoted the value of the office of assayer at 15,000 ducats, this was for the office of assayer alone, without taking into consideration the added value brought to this by the post of smelter. Not only was this something later explained in 1571 by the Viceroy to the King (for the textual Spanish explanation from the Viceroy see endnote 117), but it is important to know that this is the same Juan de Cueva who ended up buying the joint office of assayer and smelter later for almost double this amount (for more on this see endnote 119.)

(108) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 92, (op. cit. n. 102.)

(109) AGS: C.J.H. leg. 106, núm. 9 (sin folio). (Document discovered by Glenn Murray.)

(110) Dasí, (op. cit., n. 32), Vol. II, pp. IX and XVIII, No. 370 and 391. The shield-type coins were authorized by decrees of November 23, 1566 (for Peninsular Spain) and 8 March 1570 (for the Americas.)

(111) Medina, (op. cit., n. 1), p. 43; AGI: Indiferente, 738, N. 121. Although José Toribio Medina does include the information from this document on his monumental work, the date is incorrectly reported to be May 30, 1570 (the correct date is May 31).

(112) The 8 reales denomination was not currently being minted in the New World at the time of this decree. But when this denomination was later added, this followed the same design as used on the 4, 2, and 1 reales.

(113) AGI: Indiferente: 426, L. 25, F. 55r (March 18), F. 62r (May 20), F. 64r (June 7), and F. 68v (June 28). All four of these documents from the year 1570 include payments made to a Juan Paulo Poxini for the punches made for the mints of New Spain (Mexico) and the City of Kings (Lima); Nesmith (op. cit., n. 43), p. 39. Only the document dated June 28, 1570, was known when Nesmith documented this

information, taking the name from José Toribio Medina's work as ROXINI, but he indicates that Adolfo Herrera in the book *El Duro*, Vol. 1, writes this name as PROXINI. The discovery of the other three documents helped to clarify the correct spelling of the name for this sculptor as POXINI.

(114) American Numismatic Society, Proceeding No. 5, Coinage of the Americas Conference, Editor W. L. Bischoff, *The Coinage of El Perú* (New York, NY, 1988), p. 48; Medina (op. cit., n. 1), p. 155 (footnote 26). In the section from the Coinage of the Americas Conference titled “The Early Lima Mint,” the author, Eduardo Dargent Chamot, writes that: “...on April 24, 1571, Ramírez de Cartagena informed the king that he had received the order to change the dies and it would be done as soon as they arrived.” (Source: Archivo General de Indias: Lima, 270). Medina confirms the arrival of the dies on March 1, 1572, saying: ““Y después envió S. M. nuevos cuños. Con cédula de 8 de marzo de 1570’. Carta de Miguel de Rojas, sin fecha, pero de Lima. Finalmente, el Virrey Toledo en la suya de 1.<sup>o</sup> de marzo de 1572, le anunciaba: ‘Las nuevas marcas que V. M. envió para que en este reino se marque la plata y oro y acuñe la moneda se recibieron en Lima y se usara dello conforme a lo que V. M. manda.”

(115) AGI: Panamá: 229, F. 65V-69V; Archivos Nacionales de Panamá (ANP), P. 27, D. 65vto - 69vto. This is a 14-(numbered) paragraph document. Paragraph no. 2 orders the legend to be placed on the coins minted in Panama saying: “...toda la dicha moneda a de tener al rededor en ambas partes un letrero que diga filipus dey gracia yspaniarun et yndiarun rex...”

(116) AGI, (op. cit. n. 97.)

(117) AGI, (ibid, n. 116). This document states: “...teniendo puesto el officio densayador en veinte y cinco mil ducados visto q' se dividia bolvieron a dar diez y seis y no pasaba nadie de alli y asi se ovieron de vender entrambos Juntos como los tenía Luys Rodriguez que usava en hambos offíciios y el de fundidor sín derechos...”

(118) AGS, (op. cit. n. 109.)

(119) AGI, (op. cit. n. 97); AGI: México, 217, N. 17. On April 6 and May 4, 1571 Viceroy Enríquez de Almansa notified the King that the office of assayer and smelter had been sold for 29,100 ducats, without mentioning the name of the buyer. For an example of one of his statements, the document from May 4, 1571 reads: “El officio densayador ya escrivi a .Vuestra. magestad como se avia vendido officio ensayador en veinte y nueve mil y cien ducados y por esa secutoria vera Vuestra magestad como el ensayador es obligado a aZer officio de fundidor sin llevar derechos por ello.” We finally discover the name of the buyer, this being Juan de Cueva, through a document dated December 22, 1583, which reads: “...abra doze años poco mas /o menos que por mandado de su magestad se vendio En publica almoneda El oficio de Ensayador y fundidor de la casa de la moneda desta ciudad y se rremato en el dicho juan de cueva En veinte E nueve mill y cien ducados quel dicho scrivano es publico pago con ayuda de algunos amigos . E se puso En cabeça de joan de cueva . su hijo. que a la sazon . hera muchacho . de siete u ocho años...”

(120) AGI, (op. cit. n. 72.)

(121) F. de P. Pérez Sindreu. “Ensayadores de la Ceca de México, Siglos XVI y XVII,” in *Gaceta Numismática de la Asociación Numismática Española*, No. 135 (Barcelona, Spain, December, 1999), p. 33. Luis de Oñate's involvement is known from a reference discovered by Mr. Francisco de Paula Pérez Sindreu in the General Archive of the Indies (AGI: Escribanía, 273A). According to Pérez Sindreu, the reference to Luis de Oñate, dated on July 9, 1608, states that he had been working for “more than 30 years in this post of assayer” (“más de 30 años en este puesto de ensayador.”) It is

more than likely that Luis de Oñate, as Bernardo had done before him, started as an apprentice or assistant, later being promoted to the status of lieutenant.

(122) Some have stated that Luis de Oñate was the son of Bernardo de Oñate. But the family relationship between these two assayers has not yet been established through documentary sources, for which this assumption, although likely, is currently only hypothetical.

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96, 100-112, 121-125, 129-133, 135, 137-139, 141, 149-152, 162 and 165  
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Æ Prutah Struck under Pontius Pilate  
CNG



Judaea, Roman Administration. Tiberius, with Julia Augusta (Livia). AD 14-37. Æ Prutah (16 mm, 1.61 g, 6h). Struck under Pontius Pilate, praefectus Iudeae. Dated RY 16 (AD 29/30). Simpulum; L IΣ (date) in legend / Three grain ears. Meshorer 331; Hedin 1341; RPC I 4967. Good VF, green patina. Choice for issue.  
Courtesy CNG Auction 96, lot 673.

Editor's note. The "prutah" is a coin worth a fraction of the smallest Roman coin of the time which was the *quadrans*. The *simpulum* is a ladle used in the Roman priesthood, which would have been an offensive symbol to the Jewish people. (Modern scholarship suggests that Pilate himself may have been a member of one of the Roman orders of priesthood.) The legend around the simpulum reads "TIBEPIOY KAICAPOC L IΣ" which to me seems to be Tiberius Caesar [Emperor Tiberius] followed by "L" for "year" and "I" for "10" and "Σ" for "6" which works out to be "year 16". This is year 16 of the reign of Tiberius so add 16 to AD 14 (beginning of Tiberius reign) and date is either AD 29 or 30 depending on how we treat his initial year (as 0 or 1). The opposite side has a central design of three barley stalks and surrounding legend of IOΥΑΙΑ KAICAPOC which, again to me, seems to be Julia Caesar [Empress Julia]. Julia was the daughter of Augustus and wife of Tiberius but had died much earlier than the issue of this coin, in fact even before Tiberius became emperor.

Further reading:

"The Widow's Mite Coin" by Stewart Huckaby online at:

<http://www.coinlink.com/News/ancients/the-widows-mite-coin>

*The Coins of Pontius Pilate. Marco Polo Monographs 4.* By Jean-Philippe Fontanille and Sheldon Lee Gosline. A related web page synopsis worth a look:

<http://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=pontius%20pilate>

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